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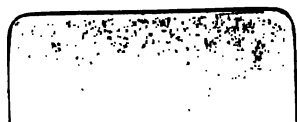
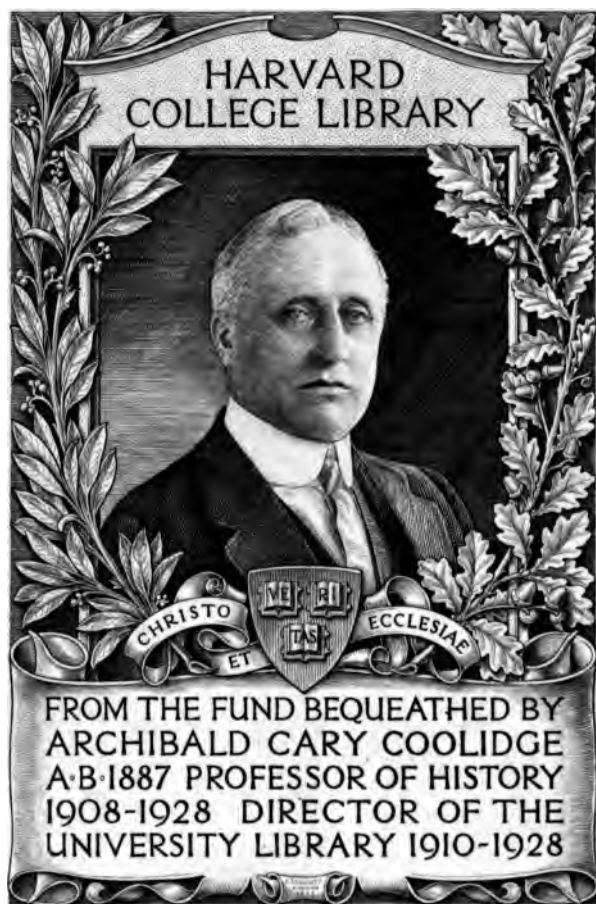
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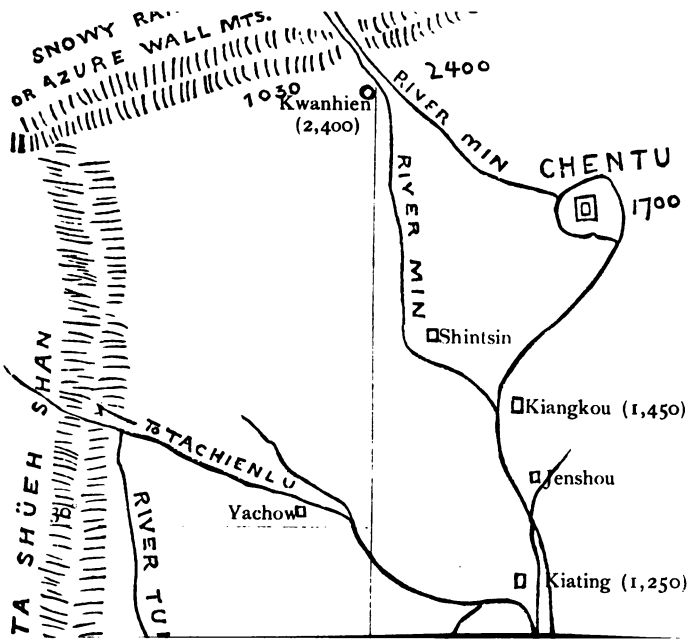
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Little. Across Yunnan & Tonking. 1905

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IGI
A

cross Yunnan & Tonking

By Archibald Little.

Part I. Between two Capitals.

Part II. Yunnanfu to the Coast.

CHUNGKING

1904.

Ch, 220.18

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YUNNANFU TO HONGKONG.

	MILES.	STAGES.
Land journey from Yünnanfu to Mêngtse, viâ the Yliang defile and the Chênkiang lake, 720 li, say ...	215	12
Land journey from Mêngtse to Manhao, 130 li, say ...	39	2
Manhao to Laokai, by Red River	70	1
	—319	—15
<i>N.B.</i> —The distance by the new direct alignment from Yünnanfu to Laokai is 448·2 kilometers = miles 280.		
Laokai to Yenbay by Red River	91	1
Yenbay to Hanoi do.	115	1
Hanoi to Haiphong by rail	62	1
	—268	— 3
<i>N.B.</i> —The distance by the railway direct from Laokai to Haiphong will be 395 kilometers = miles 247.		
Haiphong to Hongkong, viâ Pakhoi, Hoihow, and Kuangchouwan, by sea.	580	4
	<hr/> 1,167	<hr/> 22

Yünnan is situated in the S. W. corner of the Chinese Empire proper and is a mountain-covered plateau,—not a simple tableland or “Hochebene,” as is the Mongolian plateau in greater part. It averages 5,000 feet above the sea-level in the actual and dried-up lake basins that yield a limited level area between the mountains, and 8 to 10,000 feet in its innumerable mountain crests; whereby is indicated the general ancient level of the whole plateau. It may be classed as a S.E. peninsula extension of the high Tibetan plateau to which it is directly attached on its N.W. border. It is the third largest province of the empire and covers an area of 108,000 square miles. Compare Great Britain with 88,000 square miles and Tonking with 50,000. In situation and climate it bears a marked analogy to that of the high plateau of Mexico, whose mean temperature likewise ranges from 60° to 70° (the extremes being 50° to 86°). The new French Railway from Haiphong to Yünnanfu may be compared with that from Vera Cruz to Mexico which rises 8,000 feet in 263 miles with gradients of 2.51 per 100. The population was estimated by Davenport in 1877 to have fallen, in consequence of the ruthless extermination of the Mahomedans and the mutual massacres of the contending parties, from the original estimate in 1850 of 6,000,000, to about 1,000,000. But, owing to the great recuperative powers of the Chinese, as well as by immigration from overpopulated Szechuan and from the adjoining province of Kueichou, the population is now believed to have increased, during the generation that has succeeded the suppression of the Mahomedan revolt by the capture of Talifu in January, 1873, to about 12,000,000,—almost the full number that this rugged province is capable of supporting.

S/

The Yünnan plateau falls abruptly to the valley of the Yangtze to the north, to the valleys of the Mékong, ~~P~~alween, and Irrawaddy on the west and to that of the Red River on the south; involving, in each case, a sudden change from a temperate to a tropical climate, which the inhabitants of the plateau (and *vice versa* those of the border lands) are unable to withstand: hence the isolation of its people. On the east an easier gradient slopes to the basin of the West River of Canton; this gradient provides the most convenient access to the province and a lively traffic by this route formerly existed, until it was practically closed by the long continued disturbances in the province of Kuangsi and the resultant prevailing brigandage. This traffic has now been diverted to the more roundabout route via the Red River and Tonking. When the intervening country shall have again been restored to orderly government, a railway along the West River valley will provide the easiest and most natural means of access from Canton and Hongkong to the Yünnan plateau.

S/

The general trend of the mountain ranges is from north to south; hence the difficulty of entering Yünnan from the Burma side by way of the present trade route from Bhamo to Tali and so on to Yünnanfu. The intervening rivers run in deep troughs, difficult to cross, while the Tien~~T~~hang range west of Tali reaches an elevation of 14,000 feet. The ranges in this north-west corner of the province are, in fact, long spurs running down from the eastern extremity of the great Himâlyan range, and alone effectually bar off the province from direct access to the upper valley of the Irrawaddy, and so from Upper Burma. On the other hand it would appear from recent surveys that, by the line from Mandalay crossing the ~~P~~alween at the ~~K~~unlung ferry, a fairly practicable route, following the north and south trend of the ranges, has been traced up to Talifu; and that this western route presents fewer natural difficulties than those which the French are successfully surmounting in the East. But, like the French line, it passes through a very sparsely inhabited country and is thus not likely, for years to come, to pay as a commercial venture; hence, without some sort of extraneous Government support, there is little prospect of its being built. Yet the supply of Yünnan, with the cottons and hardware it now imports in exchange for its opium and mining products, would seem to be worth competing for, even at the cost of some present sacrifice. British manufacturers generally and the merchants of Rangoon in particular cannot but be interested in the early development of a practicable trade route between Yünnan and Burma; the only present means of intercommunication being a precarious mule track, dangerous at all times and impassable in the rainy season, which connects Tali with Bhamo by the mountain-barred route via Têngyüeh.

Yünnan lies between the parallels of 21 and 29 latitude north and between the meridians of 98 and 106 of longitude east: across the province, from Indo-China to the Yangtze, the plateau extends for a distance of 600 miles. From Bhamo to Tali the distance is 280 miles and from Tali to Yünnanfu 227 miles. Although, as above stated, the mountain ranges of Yünnan,—northern and western Yünnan especially.—

run generally north and south; yet, through the centre of the province, uniting the eastern and western capitals,—Yünnanfu and Tali,—there runs an ill-defined backbone from which radiate north and south valleys, on the slopes of which the streams watering these valleys take their rise. Hence these 200 miles, separating the two chief cities of the province, can be bridged by a line following this backbone with comparative ease; and presuming, as is only natural, that Yünnan, the eastern capital falls within the French “sphere of influence” while Tali, the western capital, drops into the British sphere, then a race will ensue to build this connecting link. From Yünnanfu to Manhao the distance is 255 miles, thus making the total travel across the province, east and west from Bhamo to Manhao, by the existing trade route, 761 miles. The general formation of the country, north of Yünnanfu, as we have told in the account of our travel, may well be described as “clusters of grey limestone islands emerging from a sea of red clay”—the product of their detritus.

Yünnan is bounded on the north by Tibet and Western Szechuan, on the east by the provinces of Kueichou and Kuangsi, on the west by the Shan States and Burma, and on the south by Tonking, the French Laos States, and the British Shan States of Xientong and Xienhung, the point of junction where “three Empires meet” being, on the Mékong river, 30 miles south of the Yünnanese town of Kienhong.

Between two Capitals.

BY

ARCHIBALD LITTLE.

Yunnanfu (or Yunnansen, meaning Capital of Yunnan)

15th July, 1904.

Having found the province of Yunnan and the journey thither very different from my expectations, notwithstanding that I had read almost everything written on the subject in your all-embracing paper, I think your readers may also like to hear more about this unique region and to read the fresh impressions made upon an old traveller in visiting this sequestered corner of the Empire. The province of Yunnan is farther of special interest at the moment, since its boundaries have become coterminous with those of the British Indian and of the French Indo-Chinese empires;—and that a race has set in between the two Powers for the development of their respective interests in this land of great potentialities—a race in which undoubtedly so far our French friends are a good first.

From the capital of Szechuan to the capital of Yunnan, a distance of 700 miles by the nearest road, but of little more than five degrees of latitude, the time occupied by us in the journey was exactly forty days. The water in the branch of the Min river that washes the walls of the provincial capital being, at the time of our departure, the end of April, very low, in consequence of the irrigation requirements of the great Chêngtu plain; we started out from the city by the land route to Kiating, proceeding thence by boat to Suifu and thence again for the remainder of the journey by land, there being in Yunnan no alternative choice of water carriage such as we find in so many of, if not all, the other provinces of China, and notably in the well-watered province of Szechuan.

We travelled to Kiating by way of Meichou, a district artificially irrigated in the simple but marvellously effective manner devised by the hydraulic engineers of old,—the westernmost arm of

the Min river, as it descends from the high mountains to the north of Kuanhien, being utilised for this region. A barrage of boulder crates, over one mile in length, laid diagonally across the stream, holds the water up ten feet above its natural level and diverts it into a network of channels skilfully planned to cover the whole plain between Hsin-tsing (Newford) and Kiating, a distance north and south of about sixty miles. From Kiating onwards, our progress was agreeably accelerated by a sudden freshet, the Tung river which descends from Tachienlu and from Yachou in two branches, being at the time in spate: we thus made the 100 miles from that city to Suifu at an average speed of seven miles an hour, shooting a constant succession of fierce rapids, and so reaching Suifu in one day's journey. Suifu is an important distributing mart situated at the point of junction of the Min with the Kinsha,—the "small river" as it is styled by the Suifu folk;—navigation on the Kinsha, the main branch of the Yangtze as marked in our maps, ceasing a short distance above Suifu; whereas the Min river, in its different branches, is navigable for hundreds of miles, and is the main channel of communication with Chêngtu and all the wide country to the north and west. The Min too at this season brings down the larger body of water until later, in June, the Kinsha begins to swell, as the monsoon rains gain force in Yunnan and bring about the great summer freshets of the main Yangtze stream. Hence travellers, as well as goods, proceeding from Szechuan to Yunnan, take the land road at Suifu which, by way of the Yunnan prefectural cities of Chaotung and Tungchuan, leads to Yunnanfu, in a journey of twenty-four

stages,—not including necessary halts to rest the coolies. The road follows much the same direction as does the course of the Kinsha,—here pointing nearly due south, and, were this river navigable, one could proceed by it almost to the gates of Yunnanfu, i.e., within two days' long journey of the capital in latitude 25 south; as it is, we proceed by the valley of one of its affluents, the "Takuan" or "Laowat'an," which runs parallel to that of the Kinsha, separated from it by ranges of lofty, sparsely inhabited, mountains; and so we see nothing more of the Great River after once having been ferried across it at the village of Anpien, ninety li above Suifu. This port of transshipment faces the mouth of the Takuan river, twenty miles above which the navigation of the Kinsha entirely ceases at the city of Pingshan,—Blakiston's farthest, and the highest limit which the Woodcock, one of H.M. light-draft twin-screw gunboats, ordinarily stationed at Chungking, has succeeded in reaching. On leaving Suifu the road follows up the left bank of the Kinsha, through undulating richly-cultivated country,—the foothills of the high mountains behind,—until Anpien is reached. Above this point the Kinsha flows in a deep gorge and at Pingshan the rich foothills merge into the wild mountains,—inhabited by the independent and inaccessible Lolo. At Anpien we cross to the right shore of the Kinsha, to the point where the river coming down from Laowat'an in Yunnan, and commonly called the Takuanho, enters the Yangtze. At the time of our journey, in May, the Kinsha was rolling down thick yellow-ochre coloured water to join the clearer waters of the Min and its affluents at Suifu; but the contribution of the Takuan, alias Laowat'an river, was transparently clear, coming from a purely limestone region, and its contribution added about one-third to the volume of the Kinsha. It flows down from the mountains to the south with a rapid torrent which would render it unnavigable in any other country but China. Yet, notwithstanding, we saw numerous junks of from five to ten tons' burden and crowded with passengers on their decks descending safely aided by hugh bow-sweeps. Later on we encountered numerous wrecks, but goods and passengers encounter the undoubted-ly serious risk in preference to the plod-

ding over the execrable land-trail it was now our fortune to enter upon.

From Anpien on we proceeded up the narrow valley of the Laowat'an river, which threads a devious course between steep high mountains, its bed nowhere wider than the actual valley which the torrent has cut out, and which flows from the south in a course almost parallel to that of the Kinsha further west;—the latter here separating the Chinese territory of Szechuan and Yunnan from that of the independent Lolo tribes who inhabit the "Terrace of the Sun," the lofty, almost inaccessible range which here forms the left bank of the Kinsha river. The right bank of the Kinsha in this stretch is formed by a second range of high mountains, running likewise north and south, which separate its valley from that of the Takuan, or Laowat'an river; the mountains on both sides running up in height to ten and twelve thousand feet. For ten days we marched steadily up the valley until the water-parting which forms the natural boundary between the low moisture-laden basin of Szechuan and the high, dry plateau of Yunnan is reached at the head of the Laowat'an river:—but we crossed the political frontier between the two provinces on the third day out from Suifu, at the small village of Hsinchang (Newmarket), where a picturesque side-valley from the east forms the boundary. This is crossed by a handsome many-arched slab bridge and Yunnan is entered. It is not, however, until the city of Takuan, from which the river takes its name, is reached on the ninth day, that the "Red Basin" is left behind and the characteristic vegetation, the banian and the bamboo, and the warm climate of Szechuan, come to an end. We have now ascended 4,000 feet and in the evening in the inn overlooking the torrent, the thermometer, on the 22nd May, showed 86 degrees, whereas after we had entered upon the real Yunnan plateau, it never rose to 80, 70 to 75 degrees being the usual day maximum,—even now in July, at the commencement of the "Fu-t'ien" or Dog days, in Yunnanfu, as I write this. The city of Takuanchêng is the capital of the T'ing or district of Takuan (Great Barrier), and once formed the frontier fortress against the wild aborigines,—the Miaotse and Mantse who 1,000 and more years ago

formed the sole population of Yunnan. The walled city of Takuan is built on a high flat to which a steep ascent from the valley leads up, and in the midst of an imposing amphitheatre of lofty-fluted limestone mountains.

Owing to the devious course of the river and the precipitous gorges in which it is in parts enclosed, the path fails to strictly follow its banks and so has to cross intervening mountain ridges, ascending, and again descending, 3,000 to 4,000 feet by the most miserable path masquerading as a high road that it has ever been my unhappy fate to traverse. Again, when marching along the valley bottom, it often happens that a cliff 500 or 600 feet high has to be surmounted and in such places a climb, at first sight seemingly impassable to man or beast, has to be made over it. Instead of a short gallery along the face of the cliff itself, which it would have taken hardly more labour to cut out, steep steps have been cut up and down in the hard limestone, so as to surmount the cliff and some of these I measured with my pocket foot-rule and found to be exactly one foot high and one foot deep,—thus making the path, in places, an ascent,—and what is still worse, a descent, at an angle of 45 degrees. And over this passes the main traffic between the two rich provinces of Szechuan and Yunnan. The men of old did good work when they cut out these steps, but the path has not been relaid for hundreds of years and the pack animals have worn pot-holes, leaving what Coleridge, writing of German paths 100 years ago, well calls "Fangs," and these the sandalled feet of the coolies (shod with iron clamps beneath) have polished to a surface of blue glass:—

"In Koeln, a town of monks and bones,

And pavements fanged with murderous stones,

And horrid sights and ghastly wenches,
I counted two and seventy separate stenchcs," etc.

We will omit reference to the stenchcs in the Chinese inns, which the traveller in China pays the penalty of enduring night after night, and draw attention only to the miserable conditions under which trade and traffic has to be carried on in China to-day. Germany has been metamorphosed in the past hundred years, but it needed the shock of a Napoleon to break up the old régime. Will a like

convulsion be needed in China to rid this magnificent country of the opium-smoking debauchees who now rule it, who keep the people in poverty and ignorance, and to whom the word public-spirit is a dead letter? These thoughts naturally occurred to us as we sat in our sedan-chairs, each of which had its staff of six coolies, and were carried painfully over these paths, upon which we could ourselves neither walk nor ride. Owing to the heavy toil demanded of the coolies, the "chan" or stage is here only sixty li in lieu of the usual ninety. The dry winter season is naturally the best for travel but we were now in the rainy season: notwithstanding that the roads are thus rendered all but impassable, a large traffic was going forward. We met train upon train of coolies carrying the larvæ of the wax insect, raised in Yunnan, for development in Szechuan, where the insect eggs are planted out on forests of *iraxinus sinensis*, a species of ash, cultivated for the purpose in the districts of Suifu and Kiating. Great care has to be taken to prevent premature development en route: the larvæ are carried in paper bags spread upon well-ventilated bamboo trays and, upon arriving at their destination each night, the carriers have to open out each bag and so expose the contents to the air. Before turning in after their hard day's tramp, the coolies have to repack the parcels and so have their loads all ready for an early start the next morning. We also met long trains of miserable sore-backed ponies laden with copper, tin, and spelter from the mines in Yunnan on its way to shipment down the Yangtze from the port of Suifu; the return loads into Yunnan being largely Shasi (Hupeh) cotton cloth and silk hat covers and "notions" from Szechuan. Needless to say that the route is strewn with likin stations, which cause long delays to the porters, there being large variations in the value of copper cash and silver between every prefecture we passed through: Chaotung boasts 1,400 cash to the tael, Tungchuanfu 2,000 odd and Yunnanfu only 900 odd,—but the cash vary accordingly to the amount of copper they contain which varies from nil up to the full quantum; but the great trouble is that one district will not accept the cash current in the next, and the traveller has to make provision

or be mercilessly squeezed, accordingly.

Although patches of the Szechuan red sandstone are found on the hill-sides, growing rarer and rarer as one proceeds south and vanishing entirely ere the valley of the Takuan river is left behind, one may classify the whole region from Suifu to Yunnanfu as a country of rugged limestone mountains, with valleys between filled by its weathered detritus. We had been following up a valley walled in by white cliffs which opens out, yielding ground for a city, for the first time at Laowat'an: this and the two prefectural cities of Chaotung and Tungchuan are the only places above the rank of villages traversed between Suifu and Yunnanfu. At Laowat'an ("Cormorant Bar") the river valley is intersected at right angles by a wider valley running east and west, and the town is picturesquely situated at the junction. It is a busy place of about 20,000 inhabitants and possesses a station of the "Bible Christian" Mission under a native pastor, whose clean dwelling it was a true pleasure to be received in. The town, which stands at the head of junk navigation, stands nearly 2,000 feet above sea-level and 800 feet above Suifu on the Yangtze. Above Laowat'an the river is nothing but a roaring torrent, but with a considerable body of water: the road continuing south here crosses it by a handsome suspension bridge seventy-five yards in length. At this place porters and teams generally put in a day's rest, partly to fulfil the demands of this, the great likin station on the Szechuan-Yunnan trade route ("La douane la plus productive de la province"—Rocher's Yunnan. Paris, 1880), and well-named "Cormorant Bar," partly to prepare for the thirty li high pass which is surmounted immediately on leaving Laowat'an (the Li Shan Ting,—4,000 feet)—a zigzag ascent cut out in rough steps, descending from which we find ourselves once more in the valley of the Takuan river. The view from the summit roams over a sea of rugged mountains, with smooth-sloping backs and jagged edges, as the strata dip at an angle of 35 from S. S. E. to N. N. W. Patches of purple shale cover in places the general surface of pale brown and brick-red fields of limestone detritus: maize, potatoes (now in flower), together with small fields of stunted poppy, cover the slopes; but wherever

the numerous springs afford irrigation, the land is painfully terraced for paddy, many embanked fields of this prime necessity being hardly larger than a Soochow bath-tub. We here bought dumplings of glutinous rice, the interior garnished with poppy-seeds. The villages are small, filthy, and ruinous, the people abjectly poor and apparently steeped in opium: our coolies all smoked opium and declared they could not carry loads up these terrible paths without its stimulus. Possibly, as things now are:—yet a paternal government who should improve the roads and absolutely prohibit the noxious drug might see a hardy race develop such as we find the Miaotse,—deep-chested, rosy-cheeked and though, men and women, carrying heavy loads up the steepest mountain paths, yet free from the curse which is ruining the Chinese; the latter are pale, sickly-looking, but being united, whereas the Miaotse and Mantse, split up into independent tribes, have no cohesion, continue to drive these back into the most inaccessible and barren regions in the surrounding mountains.

The valley we have been ascending comes to a sudden and romantic termination, on the tenth day out from Suifu, at the village of 'hushuitung or "Issue-water Cavern," so named from its being the site whence issues the source of the Takuan river. Here the white limestone cliffs, between whose walls we have been slowly toiling until we reach an altitude of nearly 5,000 feet, approach to within one hundred yards of each other until they run into and under a transverse wall two thousand feet high, smooth-faced, with a rounded, green, grass-grown summit—apparently an insurmountable barrier to farther advance. Looking up from the crystal stream gushing forth from the cavern at our feet and being told that our way led up and over this barrier, we experienced the sensation we felt as children when we read of Jack preparing to ascend his bean-stalk and mount into regions unknown and bearing all the attraction of novelty. It was a most dramatic scene apart from the intrinsic beauty of the landscape, and well repaid us for the toil we had endured to reach it. Another stony zigzag path, hidden in low verdure,—a couple of hours' steady climbing and lo!—we reach the summit of the

ridge and find ourselves suddenly transferred to an absolutely new land,—as different from that we had left behind us as though we had crossed the Mediterranean from Europe to Africa. We were at last on the Yunnan plateau. The ridge is known as the “Lohan” Ling or “Arahat” Pass.

We had now left Szechuan behind and found ourselves crossing a level plain bordered by rugged limestone ranges on the right and left, the plain averaging from one to two miles in width. The scene reminded us of a valley in the west of Ireland,—level bog-land enclosed by mountains, and a cold, drizzly rain, with the mountain summits enclosed in mist, completed the illusion. The path lost itself in the moor and suddenly we found ourselves crossing a quaking bog, much to the alarm of our Szechuan coolies, from which we only extricated ourselves covered with black peaty mud. The bog was covered with a weed now in flower, —a rich mauve blossom which gave the plain the appearance of being under crop, but neither dwellings nor cultivated land were visible, making the wildness of the scene very impressive. It was dark when we came to the small village of Wutsai or “Five stockades” where the usual odours were smothered in the sweet smell of burning peat which is here used for fuel and which, with the accompaniment of excellent potatoes for supper, completed the illusion of having suddenly reached the Emerald Isle. At this point a small clear stream coming from the valley to the south, falls into a rock chasm on the west side of the plain, and is said to be the true source of the Takuan or Laowat'an river, the stream reappearing again at the foot of the Arahat Pass. It would seem therefore that the romantic hollow bounded by this ridge is probably a “sink” on a grand scale, such as are common in limestone regions. The villagers also pointed out a dyke which runs through the plain and which they stated is the remains of an attempted canal to drain the marsh, executed by a late Futai of the province, with intent to carry the water over and down the pass, but after spending some myriads of taels the work had been stopped for want of funds and so the plain remains the wild marsh we have described. We continued our journey up the valley by a level earth road, where we were at last able to

have the enjoyment of riding our ponies, the road passing between hedges white with “May” blossom and the hill-sides covered with rhododendron and azalea bushes, now in full flower, the flowers of the former being especially fine specimens. We had constantly to ford the wide shallow stream meandering over a pebbly bed, through grassy country with scattered scrub and small trees and patches of cultivation along the foot-hills. In the little village where we halted for tiffin on the second day out from Chushuitung, we bought a fine Reeves pheasant for 100 cash (3 pence) and then ascended to the water-parting—a ridge which closes in the valley on the south, to a height of 7,500 feet. Here is the alleged true source of the Laowat'an river, the drainage on the other side being into the Chaotung plain which we now enter.

The prefectural city of Chaotung is a walled town of 30,000 inhabitants, built in the midst of a dry but fertile plain of considerable extent, being some ten miles wide and about twenty miles long (N. by S.). The city stands about 7,000 feet above sea-level and the plain is surrounded by rugged mountains which rise from one to two thousand feet higher. The soil of the plain is the same yellowish limestone detritus which yields excellent natural roads, drying up immediately after rain and only swampy where the traffic of centuries has worn the road down into hollows in which the water collects and forms veritable quagmires for the toiling pack coolies and pack ponies to struggle through. Here, however, the greater part of the local traffic is carried on by primitive bullock carts. The valley produces large crops of maize, poppy, oats, barley, buckwheat, and potatoes, besides rice along the banks of the many small streams that descend from the surrounding hills and go to unite in the Chaotung river below. A pleasing and homelike appearance is contributed to the scene by numerous flocks of sheep and herds of cattle and ponies as well as of swine, grazing on the hill-sides, the want of which in the ranges bordering the lower Yangtze valley gives to these latter such a bare and unfriendly appearance. Chaotung boasts a flourishing establishment—teaching and medical,—of the “Bible Christian” Mission and we much enjoyed here the hospitality so freely offered by our

inland missionaries to passing travellers, and the meeting with cultured people who, unlike the Chinese, upon whom one is so largely thrown for social intercourse in these remote parts, have a soul above the all-absorbing interest of "cash." We left Chaotung for the journey of five stages south to Tungchuan, with a north-east gale blowing and cold rain falling,—fortunately at our backs,—the thermometer marking 55. Upon reaching the edge of the plain and entering the foot-hills of the higher mountains to the west we passed over slopes of brick-red earth (much like the red laterite along the Yangtze near Kiukiang), intermixed with pebbles; ancient lake beds filling the hollows in which black peat marshes alternated with irrigated paddy-fields. Farms of thatched adobe occupied the slopes of these "bottoms," picturesquely ensconced in groves of Scotch fir, fine large walnut, apricot, and *ligustrum lucidum* trees. These latter, a kind of privet, are grown to breed the wax insect upon, prior to his transportation to Szechuan. Huge cubical blocks of a shaly limestone lay scattered in many of the bottoms and we passed several abandoned coal adits and iron-mines, the latter traceable by the vast masses of slag thrown out by the ancient workmen. The strata hereabouts appeared mainly horizontal, whereas farther south we were struck by the sight of limestone mountains, the strata in which had been tilted to the vertical. We ascended to 8,000 feet to cross the pass of Tashuiching or "Great Spring," from the summit of which issues a fine stream of clear cold water whose course we now follow down by a break-neck descent to the valley of the Niulan river, four thousand feet below. The view from the summit of the pass extended over ridge upon ridge of steep rugged mountains as far as the eye could reach and, it being a fine clear day, we sat long and enjoyed the view while our coolies took a well-deserved rest in the grove which overshadowed the gushing water. We slept on the banks of the Niulan river in the village of Kiangti: which we found uncomfortably close and smelly after the mid-day temperature of 51 degrees at Tashuiching. Kiangti, which means "River bottom," is a dirty one-street village, squeezed in between the almost

vertical cliffs and the river bed: the river itself is a raging yellow-ochre torrent about 100 feet wide which here rushes on its way to the Kinsha at a level of 2,000 feet below and thirty miles distant. The river is crossed by a handsome suspension bridge, decorated with supporters of lions and monkeys cut life size in solid bronze. These bridges are a great feature along the main routes of travel and without them during a great part of the year travel would be impossible. pity that the same attention has not been paid to the upkeep of the roads which they connect!

We delayed our start the next morning in order to give time for the path to dry after the heavy rainfall of the previous night; yet our coolies had a hard struggle notwithstanding to carry us up the ravine formed by a side torrent which falls into the Niulan, and up whose bed the path now led. At times we forded the torrent; at times crossed by substantial bridges remarkable for the variegated-coloured limestone blocks of which they were built. An ascent to 7,000 feet brought us to the "Summit notch" (Yakoutang) from which we descended into a remarkable "Patse" or flat characteristic of the region. Tsungkai or "Central market" consists of a perfectly flat level-bottom land walled in by steep mountains whose feet, in places vertical cliffs, dip under the present plain. The old lake bed whose waters once opened a way out through a gorge to the south, by which it was eventually drained, is unmistakable. The fertility of the soil was shown in the well-built, tiled, farm-houses surrounded by extensive fields of paddy, now just ready for planting out, and the groves of fruit trees with which the "Patse" was studded. Our road now led on for five days through similar diversified country up and down, across ridges 7,000 and 8,000 feet, barren limestone mountains with intervening small fertile plains, all old lake basins, well cultivated with comfortable farms embowered in groves of firs, cypress, and fruit trees. Occasionally we crossed the dry beds of lakes, which are flooded as the rains increase in volume, but which were now level brown earth, affording good going for man and beast: some of the lakelets (haitse or "seas" they are called in Yunnan) were already filled with yellow water; some, we were told

are perennial: the "wet" lakes we had to circumvent by long détours along the edges of the surrounding mountains; some of the "dry" ones which we were able to cross in a straight line, had rocky islets covered with coniferæ projecting from their floor and reminding us of similar islets rising from the sea in the sheltered bays of the Japanese islands: many of the "haitse" were still unreclaimed marsh and the absence of inhabitants led us almost to fancy we were exploring a new world. A wild haitse of this description, many tens of miles in extent, lies at the foot of the Chinniu-shan or Golden Calf mountain, a high range in the distance on our right, away in the direction of the "Kinshā." The mountains we passed over were deeply scored by dry ravines, brick-red gashes in the green slopes which we had often to make long détours to head off. At the extreme points of such ravines, a fragile bridge of a few sticks of fir branches covered with earth, formed the path. These gashes would seem to originate in cloudbursts, which carry off the surface detritus and expose the bed rock below: this was exposed in the shape of pyramids of hard limestone, from the size of a sugar-loaf to that of a small church steeple. In many places on the mountain sides, where the strata appeared to be tilted vertical, parallel rows of such pyramids gave a striking appearance to the landscape. The mountain slopes are mostly barren and uninhabited, contrasting wonderfully with the fertility of the valleys, but their flanks are often covered with thick forests of coniferæ, the green foliage forming a striking complement to the red soil in which it grows. Few of the ravines gashed as we have described showed actual traces of water, the dry thirsty soil being very absorbent, and we can only quote cloudbursts, or as Chinese say "Chu Chiao," the "Eruption of a Dragon," to account for their existence. At times our way led through narrow valleys, along the path of a purling stream mostly tree-lined, with rich fields and good farmhouses, when the sudden ascent of a wall barrier at the top of the valley would take us into wild uninhabited country. At length, on 1st June, we crossed the last of the interminable passes separating Chaotung from Tungchuan by a Yakou or "Notch" ris-

ing to nearly 9,000 feet, and the vale of Tungchuanfu lay 1,000 feet below us.

Chaotungfu, as we have seen, lies in a wide, open plain: Tungchuanfu, the second and last city passed after leaving Takwan'ting on the way to Yunnanfu, lies, on the other hand, on the north side of a steep range of mountains which hem in the old lake basin which forms the centre of the prefecture, on the south. From the top of the gap, or notch, we looked down on the flat "Haitse;" here some three miles wide, and with a glass could just distinguish the walls of the city at the foot of the opposite range, which looked green and well-watered. The steep slope we had now to descend to reach this "bottom" was covered with knobs of limestone of all shapes and sizes, projecting from the red soil, and produced the effect of a huge graveyard adorned with rows of monotonous tombstones: the scanty herbage afforded pasture to flocks of goats, herds of swine, and not a few sore-backed pack-ponies turned out to regain condition. Our own ponies from Szechuan were as fresh as paint and seemed thoroughly to enjoy the cool bracing air, and even to enjoy being ridden again, after their experience of being led up and down the awful paths of the Lao-wat'an valley—a nightmare upon which we ourselves now looked back with delight at our escape as we now rode freely over the dry earth roads of Yunnan. On reaching the bottom we found ourselves upon the edge of paddy-fields, the rice being grown right up to the edge of the limestone rock, and across which our way led to the city where we were to repose a couple of days before going further. The plain, or more correctly "haitse," of Tungchuan we found to be still in part undrained marsh; it and the paddy-fields reclaimed from it, being intersected by drainage canals flowing between high tree-planted dykes, with a practicable pathway, about 18 inches wide, along the top. The high road traversing the valley thus meanders between paddy-fields and swamps, the remains of the old "haitse" or lake until the city walls, erected on the high ground, are reached. These drainage canals provide water intercommunication to the small villages nestling on their banks, and we noticed many scows conveying loads of peat to the back doors of the houses. The population

were all busily occupied planting out the young rice in the flooded fields, this work here, as generally in Yunnan, being performed by women; and it was pitiful to see them stumping about in the slush with their tightly-bound mutilated feet; yet they were singing at their work, happy to earn sixty iron cash per day for what is eminently skilled labour. We were again hospitably entertained here by the Bible Christian Mission, and here, as in Chaotung, opportunity of our visit was taken to hold anti-footbinding meetings, overflowing meetings which were attended by many of the officials and notabilities of the place. Tungchuan is a poor mountain city with not half the population of Chaotung and, notwithstanding the rich valley in which it stands, the populations have a poverty-stricken aspect, especially in the surrounding villages, while in the city itself we did not notice any good shops and we were told there is not one for the sale of silk, whereas in Szechuan silk is an article of dress common to all but the very poorest. Our missionary friends informed us that all the good land is owned by a few rich gentry, ex-officials, who reside within the city walls and extort half the crop from the wretched farmers for rent. There are once very productive copper mines in the neighbourhood, but these, being under official management, are no longer flourishing. The Government provides the funds but the Mining Commissioner and Treasurer of the province are said to be over half-a-million taels in arrear and only now furnish about 500 tons of copper annually to Peking,—all the copper mined in the district having to be delivered to Peking at a fixed rate—considerably under the current market value of the metal: the weiyuan, or deputies in charge, feather their nests by selling a portion of the output surreptitiously at its full value. I have often asked,—seeing that all the copper mined has to be sold to Peking—Whence comes the supply for the coppersmiths for which Yunnan is famous, copper incense burners and bronzes generally being in evidence everywhere throughout the province? An official will reply:—There are wicked men who melt down the copper cash as we coin it. But, to tell the truth, it is truly impossible to tell the truth about

anything in this topsy-turvy country, as all Chinese-speaking foreign residents know to their cost. We found the climate of Tungchuan quite wintry, a cold rain falling during our forty-six hours' stay, and we could have done well with a fire indoors,—much as often at the same season of the year in country places in England.

We started out of Tungchuan on a lovely summer's morning—the air bright and fresh after the late rains—passing through the city and out at the West Gate at 9 a.m. Unlike Szechuan, where business commences at daylight, the shops here were only now just beginning to take down their shutters and one sees few of the opium-smoking citizens moving about in the streets before noon. The path at first led west towards a steep range, about 2,000 feet above the valley, and then turned sharp south up a side ravine, down which flowed a swift muddy river, 80 yards wide and 3 or 4 feet deep, the path pleasantly sheltered from the now hot sun by many large trees. We passed large stacks of firewood from the mountains piled along the river bank for conveyance in flat-bottomed boats of the city. The narrow valley was well cultivated with paddy and maize, water being drawn off from the river into side irrigating channels and the river itself being endyked in places with solid stone embankments. Where the river impinged upon the valley walls, forming cliffs, these had, as usual, to be surmounted by steep up-and-down paths, which our ponies, now accustomed to the rough foothold, negotiated without difficulty. The hill slopes exhibited patches of purple shale alternating with jointed limestone. At one point in the valley, a river of clear water gushed forth from under the rock-wall and thus we had the spectacle of two rivers flowing down the same valley, each on its own side, one of clear and one of muddy water. We continued to follow up the muddy stream to its source near the village of Shaopai (哨排, Patrol Station.)

Here the valley came to an abrupt termination, being walled across by a steep mountain barrier, reminding one, on a small scale, of the great barrier at Chushitung, up which we had made our first great step on to the Yunnan plateau: We now suddenly climbed another 1,500 feet

and ascended a second step which brought us to a higher plateau of about 10,000 feet altitude. Originally a broad stone road, in zigzag, had been built up this barrier; but now the bulk of the paving had been washed away and a steep, slippery path alongside, upon which it was not easy to keep one's footing had been trodden out of the steep hillside and formed the only means of access to the summit. The plateau, when we at length reached it, exhibited a patchwork of brick-red and dingy green, disintegrating limestone with patches of coarse grass, and appeared uncultivated and uninhabited, but the hard, dry, sandy track made good riding. This new upland was by no means level, but consisted of rounded hill-tops, with higher ranges in the distance on either side, to east and west, our course being always steadily south. We descended from the high plateau to a level some 500 feet below, by the wide, pebbly, bed of a stream into a more cultivable country, though still the same barren-looking red soil: but here the level lands were being sown in wide fields of potato and buckwheat. The ground was being ploughed by oxen and, as the furrow was opened out, a boy followed with a sack of seed, already mixed with a dry powdery manure of burnt dung and earth, which he carried over his shoulder and which he deposited in the furrow, seed and manure together, by means of a wooden shoot attached to the sack which he carried on his shoulder. The Chinese could not afford our more liberal method of a preliminary manuring of the whole field to be cultivated, and hence, when not adopting the system just described dig a spoonful of the precious stimulant separately in the hollow assigned to each group of seedlings. On the hill slopes were flourishing fir plantations and comfortable-looking adobe farms. The country now, on our third day out from Tungchuan, became more rugged and less plateau-like; we rounded numerous tarns, some full, some dry, some large enough to deserve the Chinese appellation of *haitse* or "seas," and everywhere we found the land ploughed and crops in seed wherever cultivation was practicable, although we saw few inhabitants and came across small villages of ten or a dozen cottages only at very wide intervals. At a place called Yehchut'ang (Wild Boar Hall) we

left the high plateau, here 9,500 feet, to descend into a valley 1,800 feet below, bounded on our right (west) by a steep range of mountains sloping abruptly down to a narrow river valley, fine forests covering the lower slopes. The path on our side of the valley descended a slope nearly as steep, and led through woods exhibiting countless varieties of conifers as well as deciduous trees; the same red soil of limestone detritus yielding a dry path notwithstanding the torrential rains through which we had to keep on our way. The scenery here was very fine, the clouds rolling along the mountain tops as we rapidly descended. It was already darkening in as we reached the little mountain village of Siaolung-t'an (Small Dragon Fountain: t'an having apparently that meaning throughout Yunnan) and we put up in a rough but clean earthwalled inn. The Dragon Fountain turned out to be a reality as well as a name, being a fine stream of beautifully clear water which gushes forth from under a limestone rock at the head of a wooded glen above and supplies the village below with water. We had seen much goitre as we came along and it seemed especially prevalent in lovely Siaolung-t'an; this the villagers attributed to the fallen leaves from the trees overhanging the stream, whose decay made the water unwholesome if drunk unboiled. Why they did not adopt the obvious remedy of removing the dead leaves which lined the bed of the sparkling stream, remained unexplained. We ourselves found the water delicious and preferred it unboiled. In our descent from Wild Boar Hall we had met with neither houses nor inhabitants, and now we found Dragon Fountain village consisted only of 26 cottages and one large brand-new Buddhist temple. The north-east wind and rain increased during the night and we found our shelter uncomfortably cold and leaky, having some trouble to shift our travelling beds into dry spots, but the fresh sweet air reconciled us to any amount of discomfort when we thought of our friends in Chungking, stewing at this season in the still hothouse atmosphere which distinguishes the Upper Yangtze Valley at this season. Yet we had not bargained for two days' stay at the Dragon's Fountain, but the incessant rain led us to give ear to our coolie headmen, as they protested that

the quagmires would be impassable and the streams dangerous to ford. Prepared for summer travel, we shivered in a temperature of 53 maximum, with a keen wind blowing. At length, on the third morning, we made a start and descended by a steep path of loose stones floating in red mud, through fine woods of walnut and fir trees, to a rolling country, more like our idea of a plateau than any we had yet traversed. We crossed ridge after ridge of low hills, the vivid green of the fresh grass making a fine setting for the dark pine forests; altogether we saw more timber in this region than in any part of China hitherto visited. Constant streams from the neighbouring heights provided irrigation for extensive paddy cultivation in the little dells and flat valley bottoms, the slopes of such basins being covered with young crops of buckwheat, red pepper, the oil-seed plant, potatoes, and maize. The soil was here more shaley and varied through all the shades from yellow ochre to deep purple, but the outcrop of bare limestone pinnacles and nodules was still noticeable in all directions; innumerable such blocks were worn by what looked like the potholes cut out of the similar formation in the Yangtze Gorges by the action of water and the gneiss boulders brought down and worked in the potholes by the summer freshets. But, as one cannot imagine the whole Yunnan table-land to have ever been subjected to a similar torrential washing, it is evident that these circular openings are here due to the concretionary nature of the limestone out of which nodules have been worn in the course of time by atmospheric weathering. The vast extent of the limestone formation in West China is very remarkable: it spreads right away from the western border of the alluvial plain of Hupeh—which is first met with some fifty miles east of Ichang—right across the two provinces of Szechuan and Yunnan till the snow-capped mountains that run north and south along the Tibetan border are encountered, and where igneous rocks first come to the surface. This statement, however, has to be accepted with some qualifications. The limestone below Ichang passes under the Hupeh alluvium but crops up again in isolated ranges all round Hankow and east as far as Wusueh, where

it reappears in the high range cut through by the Yangtze in the pass of "Split Hill." Again, there is one (and only one) notable intrusion of igneous rocks in the limestone expanse described, viz., in the section of gneiss and porphyry exposed by the Yangtze in the broken mountain-range that intervenes between the Ichang and Niukan gorges. In Eastern Szechuan—in the "red basin" proper—the limestone is largely overlaid by the new red sandstone which has filled in all the hollows between the parallel ridges of limestone mountains which still raise their heads above it. In Yunnan the remarkable feature is the great height to which the limestone expanse has been raised since its original deposit under the waters of the sea, and the amount of folding, besides denudation, to which it has been subsequently exposed.

We continued through similar dry, wooded red-earth, rolling country until, on our sixth day out from Tungchuan, we reached the first town on the route, the large, dirty and apparently prosperous Settlement of Yangkai (Willow Market). Here we found a fine two-storied inn with a central courtyard 100 feet square, now a sea of black-green slush which had to be crossed on stepping stones; the place farther boasted two likin stations. On the previous day we had come across a busy likin station in the village of Kungshan, the courteous superintendent of which informed us that his collection amounted to the large sum of 10,000 copper cash daily; here the passing coolie and farmer had to pay a few cash on every basket-load. At Yangkai the superintendent informed me that his collection amounted to Tls. 30 per month only, just sufficient, as he said, to meet the expenses of the staff of four men employed in the office. Anyhow, our boy had here to pay 75 cents on two pieces of Szechuan silk he was carrying to Yunnanfu to trade with, having neglected the precaution he had adopted at the dreaded likin station of Lao-wat'an, of hiding the silk amongst our luggage, which the likin officials were good enough never to search. We had passed a file of Huamiao-tse, so called from their "flowery" petticoats, coming in to Kungshan, and whom we should like to have examined and photographed, but on catching sight of us as we rounded

a corner on our ponies, the timid creatures bolted up the hill as fast as they could run, and they run up hill like deer, nor can their shyness, as we had also found with the Mantse in Szechuan, be overcome by the, generally in China, all-powerful "cash," for which indeed they have no use. On the seventh day we descended (the ground now sloping steadily to the south, until the Tongking frontier is reached) into another ancient lake basin, now a level expanse, some five by ten miles, surrounded by an amphitheatre of mountains. The bulk of the area is now transformed into rice fields; the population here likewise being all occupied in planting out the young rice-shoots: a portion of the plain is still undrained mere, intersected by narrow clear water channels by which small shallow boats were taking peat to the villages scattered amidst the swamp fields. Part of the road by which we had descended was actually thirty feet wide, a charming country lane between banks covered with wild flowers and lined with fine trees; but now the highway across the plain had narrowed to thirty inches and less, and we had a difficulty to keep our footing on the slippery narrow mud paths which meandered amongst the paddy-fields. There is little doubt that in the "good old days" China was traversed by practicable roads, well kept up; but which under the present Manchu dynasty,—never truly at ease on their usurped throne, and so discountenancing everything tending to free gatherings of the people,—these fine roads of intercommunication—canals and highways,—have been allowed to go to ruin, while the officials who have paid dearly for their posts and are uncertain of their tenure, will not move a hand or spend a cash in attempts to restore them. On the far edge of the plain we ascended a rise to the town of Yanglin (Willow Grove), a busy crowded place, with well-paved streets, good inns and a population of 1,500 families. Commanding the high road to Szechuan, Yanglin was long a bone of contention between the contending forces at the time of the great Mahomedan rebellion, finally suppressed just thirty years ago. No trace of the desolation of that period is now visible in Yanglin, and, as an outpost of the capital, from which it is

distant thirty miles, it enjoys considerable importance. The town stands 7,000 feet above sea-level, being 500 feet higher than Yunnanfu. Leaving Yanglin, a wide paved road leads across undulating moorland country, and in places through thick forest, amidst the shelter of which we halted for tiffin, warming ourselves and drying our wet clothes at a blazing log fire on the floor of a woodman's cottage. Thence across a broken country, a very garden of limestone pinnacles, "island" hills, crags and serrated ridges, to the walled village of Tapanch'iao, situated in a small rich "haitse" of paddy-fields. The depression of Tapanch'iao is left by a long ascent through wooded country, leading up to a yak'ou or "notch," from the summit of which our eyes were rejoiced with a glimpse of the famous Sea of Yunnan, our present destination, and the longed-for termination of our arduous journey.

The view from the "notch" beyond Tapanch'iao was very fine, another wide prospect of mountains with the thin silvery streak of the lake, here looking like a river, thrown in. The far western horizon was bounded by the cliff-like wall of the Sishan, the range that shuts in the lake to the west, its cliffs falling vertically into the waters at its feet. The plain of Yunnan and the pagodas and walls of the city were hidden from view: another ridge had to be surmounted before we were able to look down on the city itself and its setting of bright green paddy-fields. As is the case with all Chinese mountain cities, the capital of Yunnan enjoys a most picturesque situation. It stands on a limestone ridge emerging from the plain, along which its north wall runs; the southern wall encloses much flat land, including a considerable extent of paddy-fields and lotus ponds, across which run stone causeways leading to temples and tea-houses; a bit of Japan with Chinese dirt and decay thrown in. Yet the view over the city and the distant lake and the amphitheatre of surrounding mountains is very beautiful, as one takes a seat on one of the rugged limestone rocks that cover the face of the slope of the ridge inside the north wall. Like Peking and Chêngtu, the city is full of fine trees, amidst which glitter the variegated tiled roofs of the many temples and guild-halls. The eye reaches across

the city with its twin pagodas and across the wide lake to the mountains beyond: these distant mountains form the waterparting between the valley of the Yangtze, to which the drainage of the Yunnan Lake basin belongs, and the drainage of the lakes in the east of the province which goes to feed the West River of Canton. At this season the cloud effects are very fine; showers are constantly proceeding at some portion of the circumference and, night after night, the sunset was preceded by a rainbow in the east. A walk through the city is not so pleasing: the streets are narrow and the shops extraordinarily small and necessarily accommodating a very limited stock of goods; they are more like booths at a fair, but built of adobe bricks, with roofs too low for me to stand upright in; the population looks well-dressed and well-fed, although they appear to spend their time mostly in smoking cigars out of inordinately long bamboo pipes,—and a foreigner in the streets attracts no notice whatever.

I had pictured Yunnanfu as a sort of Geneva, with a beautiful lake washing its quays; but here is another disillusion;—unless you ascend an eminence you see no lake at all; its shores are distant five miles from the city walls and you have to cross five miles of intervening paddy-fields to reach it: to do this occupies about three hours in the big clumsy sampans that carry on communication with the lake ports by means of the deep winding creeks that intersect the marshy plain, at whose north-east corner the city is built. The water may originally have come up to the walls, for the lake is now receding as the monsoon rains bring down yearly countless tons of detritus, and new land is being constantly endyked and reclaimed by the industrious Chinese. The marsh has been persistently drained by canals whose high embankments planted with trees are a pleasing feature in the landscape. By these creeks firewood, stone, lime, and vegetable produce are brought right up to the city gates from the mountainous western shore, and the refuse carried off. Outside the South Gate, in what is now a desolate region, mostly covered with ruins of the mud-walled houses of the country, the ground is being laid out for the new French rail-

way station;—and this now ruined (by the late civil war) quarter promises in consequence to be ere long the centre of a large population and of the activity attending the railway terminus of a great trunk line. We knew that the railway had been authorised, but we were not a little surprised to see the works on the embankment, and on the station, in full swing, and a large *yamen* in which reside the "Chef de Section" and his staff,—some twenty Frenchmen all told. The whole line from Laokai to Yunnan, a distance of about 300 miles, is let out in lots to contractors who tender for the work. These "entrepreneurs" are mostly Italians, who have had experience of similar work in Eastern Europe and Africa, and who employ Chinese labourers at a rate of \$1 each every four days. There are said to be altogether 1,000 Italians and 10,000 coolies now at work on the line. Everything in these parts appears to be going on smoothly, but below Mêngtse, where the ascent is made from the Red River valley to the plateau (a rise of some 3,000 feet), the line being carried up by the valley of an affluent of the Red River, called the Namti, difficulties have arisen and the work there is temporarily at a standstill. This is in consequence of the deadly malaria, due to what the Chinese call the Chang-ch'i (瘴氣) or poisonous air, which seems to infest all the descents from the Yunnan plateau to the valleys at its feet, especially on its southern and western borders. This summer all employed, Italians and natives, appear to have been seized with the malaria and have had to quit the valley, large numbers having succumbed to this fatal fever. Henceforward probably work in the Namti valley will only be carried on in the winter. Notwithstanding these inevitable delays, the French superintendents are confident of having trains running to Yunnanfu in four years' time. In accordance with their contract with the railway company, the Government of Indo-China are under penalty to complete the line through French territory in 1905, i.e., from Hanoi to Laokai, by which time the cuttings and embankments between Laokai and Yunnanfu will be ready to receive their rails and material. The revolution that the accomplishment of this boldly-conceived

work will effect in stagnant Yunnan is inconceivable,—besides the boon conferred upon the European residents of the surrounding tropical regions in making this unrivalled sanatorium accessible by steam to the outer world.

For the most remarkable feature of this province of Yunnan is its climate which is, I should say, the most equable in the world. The capital is situated at the medium altitude of 6,500 feet above sea-level and in latitude 25 south. Here, in June and July, we have been enjoying delightful spring weather,—warm sunshine and cooling showers with the heaviest rainfall always taking place at night; the air being at the same time fresh and pure and dry, the average day maximum being 75° and night minimum 65°. In winter there is perpetual sunshine and a range, as we note from the record of the past two years kept in the French hospital, of about ten degrees lower, so fires are seldom needed. The biting north-west winds which make eastern China north of the Yangtze a purgatory during their spell, are unknown in Yunnan, notwithstanding its high altitude. The prevailing winds in winter, as we see from the register above-mentioned, are south-east and south-west: in summer, short spells of north-east winds are common, and these bring rain and cool weather. In short, you can live in Yunnanfu with open doors and windows all the year round as in the tropics, and enjoy the fresh air minus the tropical heat and damp. No wonder that a recent French traveller, after languishing in the steamy heat of Indo-China, writes:—"Le Yunnan doit être considéré comme le prolongement économique nécessaire de notre Indo-Chine, sa citadelle aussi et son sanatorium, son grenier de ravitaillement en blé, orge, bétail, moutons, chevaux, et en général toutes productions des climats tempérés, sans perdre de vue le vaste domaine minier offert à notre activité." Yunnan is the third largest province in the Empire and has an area of 108,000 square miles.—Compare Great Britain, 88,000 square miles.

All thanks are due to the enterprise of the French Government in opening up this splendid country to the world: Tongking, acquired by the French at

about the same time as Upper Burma by ourselves, has been pacified later; but, no sooner were the Black Flags and the pirates on the Red River cleared away than the construction of a railway into the jungles north of Hanoi was taken in hand: while we have been talking the French have been acting. Our Indian Government commenced a railway which was to "tap" Western Yunnan, in a half-hearted way, and then stopped short one hundred miles from the Yunnan frontier; and so the Mandalay-Kunlong line now runs one hundred and seventeen miles north-east of Mandalay and there ends in the jungle and has, of course, little or no traffic. The French railway to Yunnanfu will cost about five millions sterling and it will doubtless, for many years, be dependent upon the Government subsidy for a dividend—but the cost of this subsidy will be amply repaid by the indirect advantages which the railway will confer upon the French possessions in Indo-China. A similar guarantee from the Indian Government would enable the connection of Burma with the western capital of Yunnan,—Talifu, to be effected, and the guaranteed interest would be amply repaid in the indirect advantages to British trade: for the cotton-goods and hardware that Yunnan requires from abroad can be more cheaply supplied from Rangoon than from Tongking. But it is as a sanatorium that Yunnan will prove of the greatest value to the European inhabitants of the surrounding countries,—Indo-China, South China proper, Siam, and Burma. The wastage of European life in all these countries is very great and, of course, means a great pecuniary loss. With Yunnan accessible by railway, an epochal change in the conditions of life in these adjoining tropical countries will be brought about; and we should take our share in rendering this change available to Indo-Burma by a short cut from British territory, even at some pecuniary sacrifice.

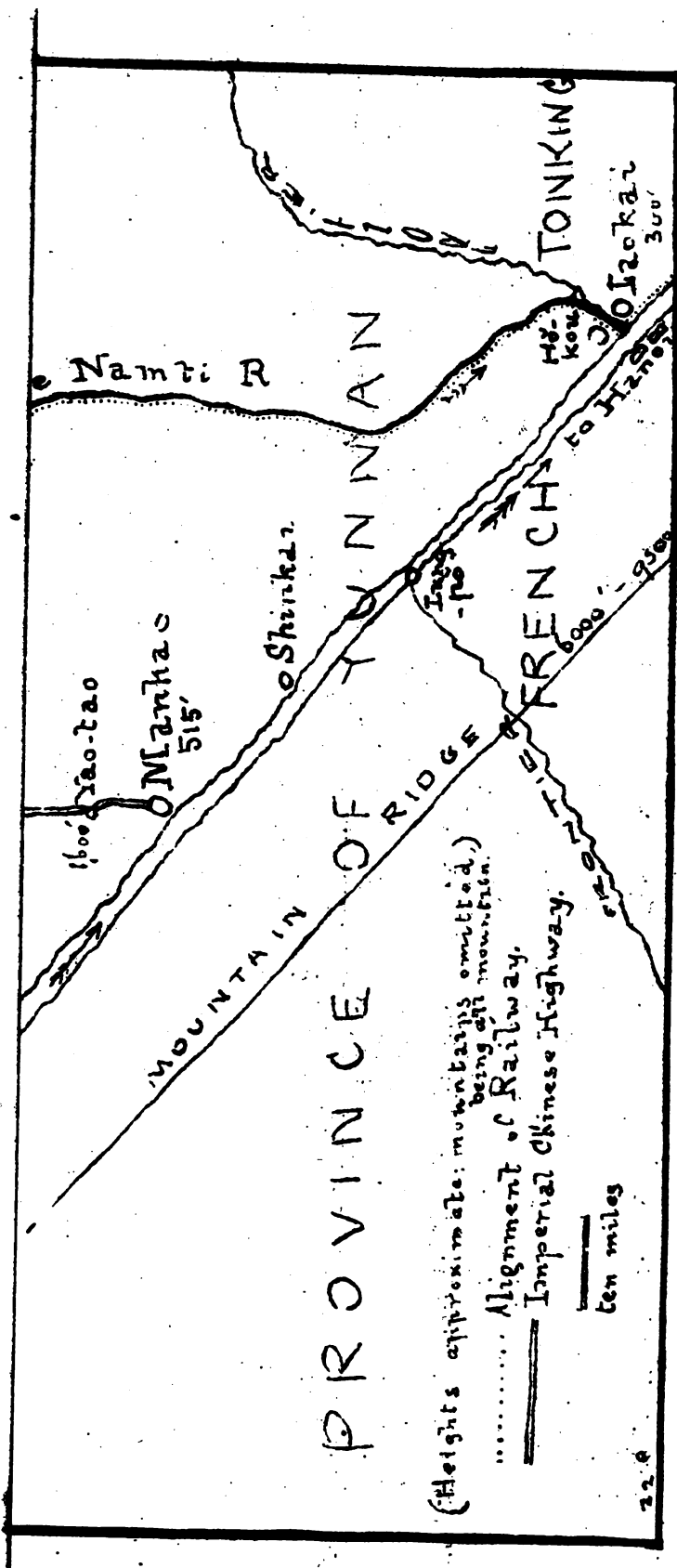
Another point which I had read much of before actually visiting Yunnan was the want of population. Certainly, in the country through which we passed through, there was no derelict land: every mow available was under cultivation with dry or wet crops according to the

nature of the soil, while large tracts of moorland, such as in England would be given over to gorse and bracken, were under the plough. Railways and the opening of mines, provided the officials are ever seriously compelled to welcome foreign mining instead of as now endeavouring to obstruct it by every device they can put forward, will develop new industries and so provide for a larger population than Yunnan under present conditions can possibly support. Should the contemplated occupation of eastern Yunnan by the French be carried into effect, the people, as distinguished from the officials, would undoubtedly be the gainers and, with the present cordial relations between our two Governments, it ought not to be impossible to agree upon terms mutually beneficial to the trade of our respective countries. That some such eventuality is the meaning of the Hanoi-Yunnan railway cannot be doubted.

The environs of Yunnanfu teem with interesting antiquities which I have no space to describe: in the western mountains are wonderful rock temples with galleries cut out of the hard limestone, beautifully carved, and commanding a magnificent view over the great lake, upon which in the near future steamers will carry tourists to the numerous points of interest. The traces of the great Mahomedan rebellion are to be seen all around the city in temporary forts and trenches bearing witness to the bitterness of the struggle which lasted for twenty years (1855-1873). It had its origin in a secret decree sent out by an imbecile Governor to all the prefects of the province to massacre the whole of the Mahomedan population in a single night;—another St. Bartholomew which, though only partially carried out, drove the then utterly unprepared Maho-

medans to rebel in self-defence. The rebellion was ultimately suppressed with the aid of foreign breech-loading guns which the Mahomedans were powerless to resist, and culminated in the terrible massacre of the whole population of Talifu, after the city had surrendered upon the promise given by the then notorious Governor, Tsên Yü-ying (the father of the present Viceroy of the two Kuang, Tsên Chên-hsuen), that the lives of the inhabitants should be spared. All this history is well described in the fascinating account of the rebellion given in Rocher's standard work. To-day the Mahomedans of Yunnan form the most energetic and civilised portion of the population, being clean in their habits and not addicted to the vices that are undermining the stamina of the purely Chinese population,—who are mostly from Szechuan and the other neighbouring provinces. As to the Yunnan plateau itself, we have already shown how different we found it to be as compared with our previous expectations. We had imagined a comparatively level, in parts rolling, upland, similar to our experience of the Mongolian plateau and the highland to the north of Sungpan:—we found it a sea of broken-rugged mountains varied by a succession of rich oases, the product of now reclaimed lake bottoms.

We have now to traverse the country between Yunnanfu and Tongking, along the line of the railway which is now being pushed forward with such energy through a very difficult and, as we are told, an extremely picturesque country, and venture to send you meanwhile an account of what we have so far experienced in this extraordinarily interesting corner of the vast Chinese Empire.



YUNNANFU TO THE COAST.

and Miaotse, whom they so cordially despise. In the range to the N. E. of the city is a remarkable mountain with twin peaks, known as the Tiehling, or Iron Mountain, sacred to Fêngshui, with a temple surrounded by a fine grove at its foot. The limestone strata are here tilted to the vertical and the consequence is that, from a distance, the mountain has a striped appearance. As we climb the steep sides of its peaks, which rise some 800 feet above the average of the range, we find these stripes resolve themselves into ridges of harder stone, broken up into more or less isolated blocks of rugged weathered limestone, while between the ridges are depressions, where the softer intervening strata have been denuded. These are now all grass-grown and afford pasturage to mobs of ponies, as well as to cattle and swine. The lines of black rock and the intervening strips of grass give the mountain its striped appearance and, in the eyes of the Chinese, its sacred character.

The story goes that the Tiehling forms the head of a dragon, whose tail is in Szechuan, and hence that he devours the riches of Yunnan to cast them forth again in the favoured province to the north. Another charming spot in the same range, ten miles east of the city, is Heilung'an, Black Dragon Springs, where is also a fine temple guarding a stream of pure water which gushes from the limestone and afterwards goes to form a small river; the meandering course of the stream being traceable, as it winds across the rice plain, by the triple row of fine old fir trees, originally planted on the slopes of its embankments. This, its principal affluent, falls into the lake opposite the Hsishan.

The hill sides are here covered with a fine variety of deciduous trees, bamboos and conifers the property of the temple. The city itself, being built on the slope of a small limestone ridge rising out of the plain, and which disappears under the expanse of paddy-fields which intervene between its walls and the lake, forms a prominent feature in the landscape. This ridge, scattered over with picturesquely shaped protruding limestone blocks, both outside and inside the city wall which runs along its crest, falls to the south in fantastic cliffs, yielding caves adorned with ancient inscriptions, while handsome temple pavilions, re-

minding one of Peking by their architecture and spacious courts, are built on the level ground below. Beyond is the Lotus Lake, which, with stone causeways running through it, leading to pavilions, teahouses, and paddy-fields, is all enclosed within the city walls. Here too is the provincial arsenal, employing some two hundred men, the workman superintendent being a Shanghai man once in the employ of Farnham, Boyd & Co. The nominal head is a Taotai from Hunan (Mo) who commanded a division of Hunan braves in the inglorious Chinese campaign in Manchuria in 1894.

The city of Yunnan successfully withstood three sieges during the Mahomedan war of 1856-1872, the last siege having been raised as the place was about to surrender, owing to the hitherto successful Mahomedan General Ma Ju-lung, having surrendered to, some say having been bought over by, the Imperialists at the moment when final victory was within his grasp. This defection of his best general rendered hopeless the cause of the Panthay chief at Talifu, and gradually the rebellion was suppressed and the country "pacified" by the ruthless Governor Tsên Yü-ying, in the final massacre of the inhabitants after its peaceful surrender in January, 1873. Tsên Yü-ying was a Kuangsi man, father of the famous Viceroy, Tsên Ch'un-hsuen. Ma Ju-lung's timely surrender saved Yunnanfu from a like fate, and the desolation within its walls that still characterises all the other towns of the province with few exceptions. A life-like statue of the famous Futai has been erected in a spacious temple built in his honour. Dressed in his official robes, his painted features show a striking family likeness to his hardly less famous son, lately Governor of Shansi and of Szechuan, and now Governor-General of the Two Kuang provinces.

The extensive suburbs have still not recovered from the total destruction to which they were subjected during these successive sieges, notwithstanding that the last took place over a generation back. The new French railway station, the buildings for the staff, and the proposed foreign concession, are now being erected amidst the ruins of the south suburb. Apart from the railroad staff of some twenty Frenchmen located in this suburb, the city now contains, of

foreign residents, a British and a French Consul-General, two China Inland missionaries with their families (rosy-cheeked children testifying to the healthy climate), a French postmaster, and a French army surgeon who has charge of a hospital erected for the benefit of the Chinese inhabitants. By the time the railway is completed, Yunnan will doubtless be made a "Treaty Port," as is the case with Chinanfu in Shantung, when cheap and rapid communication with the coast will afford opportunity for the establishment of foreign merchants, as a considerable trade is certain to be done, provided only that the present onerous transit dues through Tonking be removed or modified by the French Administration of that otherwise progressive colony. As it is, hundreds of laden pack animals now pass daily between Yunnanfu and the head of navigation on the Red River.

In leaving Yunnan for the coast, we diverged from the direct road to Mêngtse in order to learn somewhat of the progress of the railway now building: so, instead of proceeding due south and following along the east shore of the Yunnan lake we turned off almost due east across the mountains to the city of Yliang, the seat of the headquarters staff of the northern section of the road. The "tracé" or alignment of the railway, has been a sore subject of discussion and has been twice changed; the question being: Should the line follow the old Chinese trade route to Mêngtse and Manhao, thus taking in the principal cities and tapping the more populous valleys of the region; or should the alignment be the easiest obtainable from a technical point of view. Both present great engineering difficulties, involving heavy outlay for cuttings and tunnels, so that it is not surprising that the engineers should have finally decided on taking the line round by defiles which nature has excavated, although the country passed through is mostly without population or trade.

The Yunnan plateau, as we have before stated, is nothing but an endless succession of small isolated oases—cuvettes or basins—some filled with deep-water lakes, others partially occupied by shallow meres,—dotted about amidst a sea of rugged mountains. These basins, where alone the Chinese staff of life, paddy, is cultivable, are naturally the only abodes

of population who communicate with each other by passes over the walls of their respective basins; the few small rivers that flow above ground have cut out deep narrow defiles in the limestone and have provided no surplus room for villages or agriculture, while their gorges form a practically impassable barrier to inter-communication. The main problem, however, before the Yunnan Railway Company was how best to climb the wall-like ascent of 5,000 feet from the Red River valley on to the plateau; whether to ascend by a natural gorge and so proceed in the direction of least resistance, but through a wild unpeopled country, or whether to follow the old road and so pass from basin to basin either over the intervening mountains or beneath them. This latter was the plan originally selected, but after much time and money had been spent on the survey and some preliminary work had been executed, it was ultimately determined to follow up the defile of an affluent which rises on the high plateau to the east of Mêngtse, and 2,000 feet above that town, and thence falls into the Red River at Laokai. North of Mêngtse and between it and Yunnanfu, the line now determined upon follows up the comparatively easy valley of the Tachêngkiang up to the "basin" in which stands the city of Yliang, leaving the high road from Mêngtse to Yunnan, from which it is separated by a lofty mountain range, some 30 miles to the east. After traversing Yliang the railway turns west, winds through another deep gorge and then crossing a low pass (500') at length emerges in the Yunnan plain. The total distance from Laokai to Yunnanfu by the new "tracé" is 448.2 kilometres (=280 miles), which is six kilometres longer than by the old "tracé." This is the work to be carried out by the Yunnan Railway Co., who will eventually have the exploitation of the whole line from Haiphong to Yunnanfu, a distance of 521 miles, in their hands and for which a loan of £4,000,000 has been guaranteed 3½ per cent interest by the French Government. From Hanoi to Laokai, a distance of 311 miles, the railway, which follows up the left bank of the Red River, is being built by the Public Works department, i.e., by the Government of French Indo-China, and this line the department is under penalty to the Yunnan Company to com-

plete by April of next year. At the moment the line is only in working order as far as Viétri, 225 kilometres short of Laokai; the line has been laid up to Yenbay, 82 kilometres farther, but on this section the embankments along the river have been washed away by the summer freshets. When trains are running through the whole 521 miles from Haiphong to Yünnanfu, as it is expected they will be three years hence, the Yünnan sanitarium with its dry bracing air may well take precedence of Japan as the health resort of Tonking and South China.

We reached Yliang on the second day out from Yünnanfu, passing along the "chemin de service," a "cornice" road, cut by the railroad men, which skirts the mountains to the north of the Yangtsunghai, a charming mountain lake, about 12 by 2 miles, which the French call "Petite Suisse," and where it is in contemplation to open a station and build a summer hotel when the line is completed. The scenery hereabouts is very pleasing, the mountains being wooded and abounding in orchids, which we picked as we went along. Chinese habitations are conspicuous by their absence, and the whole country has the charm of a region newly opened to travel. The little lake is entirely enclosed by mountains and its waters are deep blue. We descended to the ford of the small river which drains the lake eastwards and which joins the Yliang basin by a deep gorge, of which the engineers have taken advantage to run the railway through it. All gorges in limestone country have a family likeness, and this one might be the Wushan Gorge of the Yangtze on a small scale, with its cliffs rising vertically from the water's edge, capped by steep mountain slopes above. The gorge is some ten miles long while the river that has cut it out is barely twenty yards in width: it flows with a fierce current, the city of Yliang lying nearly 1,000 feet below the level of Yünnanfu. The roar of the stream and the boom of the explosions where the tunnels, of which there are sixteen in this one defile, are being blasted out, was audible on the chemin de service, which is cut at a level some six hundred feet above the water the mountain peaks rising nearly 1,000 feet higher.

Our stage on this second day (26th

August) was Yliang, but shortly before sunset we were caught in the heaviest thunderstorm it has ever been my fortune to be out in; the road became a quagmire and as the day darkened in we came to a full stop within some four miles only of our destination; the flashes of lightning showed a village ahead, to which we painfully made our way and took refuge in an empty out-house: our carrying coolies failed to put in an appearance and we went supperless to bed on the floor. This is the second time only in years of travel, that we experienced such a contretemps and had to pass a night without our bedding, but it was actually impossible for the heavily-laden carrying coolies, having once dropped behind, to come on in such weather in the dark; they had found shelter some two miles to the rear and were very apologetic when they joined us at Yliang on the following day. Fortunately the weather was mild and we suffered nothing worse than a night's discomfort.

The hsien or district city of Yliang is a small but busy place built on the edge of a rich "patse" or rice bottom through which flows the Yliang river on its way to join the Tachêng, which ultimately finds its way through Kuangsi province into the China Sea. Here we found a French colony of railway people from whom we received every kindness, Mr. Prudhomme, the superintendent, together with his hospitable consort, regaling us with a true Parisian dinner.

At Yliang we left the line of the railway and, turning west, crossed the range of mountains that separate the valley utilised by the railway from that through which passes the main road to Méngtse. Our object was to visit the big lake of Chênkiang which lies in a fold of these mountains and aloof from any of the main thoroughfares, and so has been little visited by Europeans, excepting by those engaged in surveying the country with a view to laying out the railway. We took two days from Yliang to reach the city of Chênkiang from which the lake takes its name and which is built at its northern end; although, measured on the map, the distance between the two cities is within twenty-five miles. But we have to cross the two walls of an intervening "basin"—the Tsaopu "haitse"—a flat about five miles by one and a-half with the remnant of the old mere filling up its northern end—ascending

on one side 1,200 feet and the other 2,800 feet above Yliang to do so. The little village of Tsaotien, in the midst of the haitse, is charmingly situated in a grove of trees surrounded by fields of paddy, maize, tobacco, and sunflowers; grass- and furze-covered moorland leading up to the mountain slopes which are, as is most usually the case, bare of trees and uncultivated. We spent here our first night out from Yliang in a primitive but clean inn, having come only sixty li.

After crossing the ridge, on the following morning, we descended through a wooded valley with small clearings of buckwheat but with no houses or population visible, until we came to the foot of a steep cultivated mountain on our right hand, rising about 3,000 feet above the valley. This conspicuous mountain dominates the northern shore of the large Chênkiang lake, the prefectural city of Chênkiang being built on a "flat" between it and the great lake. Fifty li out from Tsaotien we dined in the outskirts of the small village of Niuchuang (cattle depôt) in a grove of acacia, palm, pine, willow trees, and bamboo, in which we sought shelter from a heavy shower. We had now risen to 1,900 feet above Yliang and there was a delicious freshness in the air and a cold autumnal feeling although we were still in the month of August. Thence a steep descent of twelve hundred feet, a distance of twenty li, through broken country and by paths of red shale, affording grand views over the mountain-embosomed lake (in size and appearance comparable to the Lake of Lucerne, but minus the snow peaks in the background), brought us to the walled city of Chênkiang. Chênkiang, though a walled city and looming large on the map, covers less ground than does the district city of Yliang; its area is about half a square mile and it has no suburbs without the walls: it is built on the northern edge of a strip of level paddy-fields which, similarly to Yunnanfu, separate its walls from the deep water of the lake, this cultivated strip being about a mile in depth and extending a distance of three to four miles along the northern shore of the lake. The city is traversed by wide but dirty streets and we failed to find any tolerable resting-place within its walls so, after a long search, ultimately secured rooms in a horse inn outside the south gate,—sleeping over a malodorous stable crowded with galled ponies, as, all night through,

"Champing golden grain the coursers stood

"Hard by their pack-loads waiting for the dawn."

We left Chênkiang by a path coasting the lake, the waters of which a strong south wind was dashing in breakers on a pebbly beach, with not a single sail to break the water horizon glittering in bright sunshine: the poorly-found lake boats (and, such as they are there are very few of them) only venturing out when the wind falls after sunset. After three miles thus following the north shore, we turned south and proceeded by a path which runs up and down along the foothills of the mountains which divide the lake basin from that through which runs the high road to Mêngtse, and which rise immediately from the lake shore. We passed one or two small villages where a narrow flat allowed of rice cultivation until, towards evening, we approached a conspicuous cliff-sided limestone peak, some fifteen hundred feet in height, known as the "Chienshan." Here we ascended steeply eight hundred feet, the path leading past the top of a smooth straight slope of detritus newly fallen the cliffs above, to a "col" created by an precipitous limestone cape which here juts out into the lake and from the crest of which we enjoyed a fine view over the lake and the dimly perceived higher mountains that bound its eastern shore. A rapid descent on the other side led us into a small enclosed valley filled with paddy-fields but without a house visible: thence over a second col similar to the preceding, the point enclosing a small snug boat harbour, into another terraced valley running back between wooded precipitous mountains, the rice-fields following up the mountain stream almost to its source. Here we found the little village of Lutsung ("Midway") where we put up for the night.

We left Lutsung by a path still continuing along the shore, occasionally rising over projecting headlands affording lovely views over the lake,—having close on our right a steep rugged cloud-capped range which divides the basin of Chênkiang from that of Kiangchuan,—a range rising to about twenty-five hundred feet above the lake. The lake is a dark blue colour and probably very deep,—a true mountain rift. In this showery weather the farther shore was generally invisible and, with the waves breaking on the clean boulder beach, close along the edge of which the path now led, we seemed to be coasting a sea shore. Again to-day not a sail was visi-

ble, the lake, although twenty-two miles long, being of little use to the natives as a channel of communication. Along our narrow trail we met a few teams of pack ponies carrying cotton yarn from Měngtse and the Red River, but the traffic here is very small compared with that between Měngtse and Yünnanfu.

Shortly after passing Mishin, a village situated five or six miles above the southern or lower end of the lake, the country opens out and the hills here, being composed of softer material as compared with the hard mountain limestone of the road so far traversed, have been washed down and a comparatively easy road across the water-parting is thus available into the valley of Kiangchuan. A wide break in the mountains has been formed leaving a comparatively large area open to cultivation, which here as elsewhere is chiefly devoted to paddy. The divide between the two basins, which may rise to five hundred feet, is formed of shales, including a tough white-grey marl which has been denuded into terraces and cliffs, a down which we descended on the west side in the basin filled by the Nankuang lake (so called locally) at the upper end of which is situated the walled city of Kiangchuan. Though a hsien or district city, Kiangchuan measures only about a quarter of a mile each way and seems to contain little else than an imposing three-storied drum tower, built at the intersection of its main N. and S. and E. and W. streets,—the distance from Lutsung, whence we had set out in the morning, being about fifteen miles.

Our destination for the night was the village of Haimēnch'iao, ten miles to the south as the crow flies. The road is bad, at first winding through paddy-fields and then leading up and down over the out-jutting promontories of the Nankuang lake. The naturally poor road was made worse by the continuous rains but we were reconciled to the attendant discomfort by the interest aroused by our arrival at Haimēnch'iao. The meaning of the name is Sea-gate Bridge: it is reached by a picturesque three-arched stone bridge which crosses a narrow river by which the Nankuang lake drains into the lake of Chênkiang. This river, which is little over ten yards broad at its narrowest and is about a mile in length, flows with a swift deep current past limestone cliffs on its left bank, to its outfall opposite a small high wooded island situated near the southern extremity of the larger lake. The small river would seem to have cut out a gap for itself little wider than its actual bed, leaving,

along its right bank, room for a path, shaded by fine banyan and pēng trees, along which we walked to take our farewell view of the big lake now illuminated by the setting sun, returning in the dusk, as heavy rain again set in, to find the main street of Haimēnch'iao flooded and our inn door only accessible by wading. We have now rejoined the high road to Tung-hai and Měngtse which we quitted, not far from the city of Yünnan, in order to make a détour by way of the Yliang defile and the shores of Lake Chênkiang.

These twin lakes, as one might well call them, united as they are by a short river which makes its way through this curiously narrow gap in the dividing range, are the third and fourth in the series of the five lakes that lie to the south of Yünnanfu, and which make such an attractive feature to the road thence to Měngtse, the great Chênkiang lake being the third, and the smaller Nankuang lake, upon the east shore of which stands the village of Haimēnch'iao, being the fourth. The following morning found us coasting along the east shore of this latter lake which we estimated to measure nine miles N. and S. by four miles E. and W., the surrounding mountains being low, not over 1,000 feet. It stands, of course, at nearly the same level as its sister lake, the Chênkiang, which is about 100 feet below that of the lake of Yünnanfu, say 6,300 feet above the sea. A noticeable distinction is that the ridge south of the Yünnan lake forms the water-parting between the Yangtze valley drainage and that of the "West" river of Canton, these four lower lakes all draining into the latter. The Nankuang lake is pretty but not sublime as is the Chênkiang lake,—at least when seen in stormy weather as we saw it;—its banks are fertile and we passed through many prosperous villages embosomed in fine trees and orchards of the Chinese date (so-called); tobacco plantations were also largely in evidence. We left the lake by an two hundred feet ascent over barren moorland, grass-covered but gashed with vermilion red ravines from which limestone blocks protruded—the same formation we had found to pervade the province. This moorland gives pasture to herds of cattle and goats but is bare of all culture. Thence we descended 200 feet to another "patse" or flat, a small fertile oasis in the midst of which stands the flourishing but extraordinarily filthy village of Tienszepa, the heaven-born, an old lake bottom: then over the enclosing ridge

into the valley of the fifth lake, the Tung-hai or "Eastern Sea." The Tung-hai lake is more striking than the Nankuang although rather smaller: the surrounding mountains are higher and descend in cliffs of crystalline limestone and white marble to the old lake shore which now stands a half-mile or more inland leaving a richly-cultivated level border between them and the present lake, and again giving space for flourishing villages. The weird appearance of the surrounding cliffs must have struck the holy men of old, for temples abound and the mountains behind them are covered with rich forest in consequence. Many of these cliffs are curiously waterworn and in places overhanging. Turning round and following up the south shore of the lake upon which stands the district city of Tung-hai, we traversed an extensive rice-plain (the rice now beginning to be harvested), two to three miles in width, all land recovered from the lake, the level of which is now several feet lower than it was many millennia ago when the waters of the lake undermined the present inland cliffs. Tung-haihsien is a fine old walled city, covering little more than a half square mile, with clean broad streets, lined in parts by elaborately carved two-storied shop fronts. Tung-hai is the centre of a flourishing trade in opium, that of Yunnan being famous throughout China for its superior quality,—being more akin to Indian opium, say the smokers, than is the lighter drug of Szechuan. We slept here in a temple converted into an inn; the inn, as are many in Yunnan, being kept by a native of Szechuan.

We crossed the southern lip of the basin of the Eastern Sea by an ascent of 900 feet, traversed another moorland and then descended 600 feet by a very rough path composed of a white limestone shale, with frequent minor ascents and descents, into the basin of Chung-hopa—"Central River Flat"—a fertile rice plain surrounded by wooded mountains. Thence the path descended rapidly through a thickly wooded valley, so much so that we could have imagined ourselves in Thuringia rather than amongst the usually bare-burnt mountains of China. The glen we were now traversing was indeed very beautiful, terminated in two limestone portals, barely 100 yards apart, which opened on to a wide well-watered valley, terraced with rice-fields. We had now effected a net descent of 250 feet below the level of Tung-hai; the inhabitants of the picturesque glen through

which we had just passed were mostly disfigured by goitre. They told us the land was "cold" and that both the crops and the water were indifferent.

We now descended into the extensive valley of Kwangyi, through which flows a swift-running, wide, shallow, muddy river coming from the mountains to the west and spreading out in many channels over the here level plain. We crossed its different arms and intervening sandbanks by a narrow wooden pile bridge, 500 yards long. Then, across a second swift, deep stream and over a low divide, a slippery clay-shale path brought us to the walled city, where we put up for the night, glad to get out of the rain which had fallen heavily every day since our departure from Yunnanfu.

Kwangyi is a city of ruins. The landlord of the newly-built spacious inn told us that it was now only inhabited by 300 families, whereas before the Mahomedan rebellion it had held 3,000 families. This city was a stronghold of the Mahomedans, who held the place from 1860 to 1867 until it was finally taken by assault by the Imperialists and its inhabitants put to the sword, the Futai rewarding his soldiers by unlimited license, as was common in the religious wars in Europe three centuries earlier. In 1903 Kwangyi had again the ill-luck to be overrun by rioters, this time from the neighbouring prefecture of Linngan. The walls were in ruins and we passed out the next morning through the south gate of the city, of which nothing remained but the bare brick lining of the ancient archway. The Kwangyi basin appears to have been scooped out of a marly white shale and so its surrounding hills are less precipitous; it is about six by three miles in extent and its margin little over 500 feet high. The path up the lip had been worn into a defile overarched by flowering shrubs and trees, and down which rushed a torrent, in places two feet deep, through which our coolies had perforce to wade. There are much woodland and pine groves on the slopes of the mountains bordering the defile, which rise to a height of about 1,000 feet on either side of the narrow roadway. This "stage" ends at Hsin-fang, a poor village of adobe houses (common throughout Yunnan) with flat roofs of clay and lime spread upon rafters of fir poles. The basin of Hsin-

fang measures some eight miles by four, and is filled with terraced paddy-fields. As we descended the glen which breaks through the boundary ridge, we had a fine view of lofty ranges to the south, amidst which scattered rainstorms were falling; we had now, after an endless succession of ascents and descents, reached a level 1,500 feet below Yünnanfu, and the temperature was distinctly milder. We flattered ourselves that we were now steadily descending to the Red River valley which, at Manhao, about 400 miles from the sea, stands at an elevation of 600 feet, but the sequel showed us that we had still many long ascents to overcome, and we understood why the railway engineers had abandoned the obvious line along the high road for the unpromising country through which it is now being built.

The soil still consists of a dry-looking porous limestone detritus, with projecting cliffs of hard limestone with red and white faces, and the country generally, after leaving the paddy and maize in the bottoms, is unfertile, wild-looking, and in no way picturesque. Over such desolate moorland we crossed, the next day, a plateau-like ridge, rising 450 feet above the valley. Leaving the busy and turbulent prefectural city of Linngan, the headquarters of the tin-mining industry as well as being an important opium mark, on our right, the road which hitherto had taken us due south, here turned east and south-east to Mêngtse, an important centre and the seat of a branch of the Imperial Maritime Customs, and the residence of a French Consul and the headquarters of the Mêngtse-Laokai section of the new railway. Approaching Mêngtse, now two and a-half stages distant (a stage in Yünnan averages 60 li only as against 90 in Szechuan, showing the greater difficulties of the roads), we crossed many wide substantially-built stone bridges and came upon patches of well-paved roadway, the remnants of a once Imperial highway, now mostly buried under the accumulated soil borne down by centuries of rain and wind. We halted at Mientien, a village almost totally destroyed in May 1903 by the Linngan rebels under Chou-ma-tse (pock-marked Chou), and on the following day diverged from the main road to Chikai, our next stage, to visit the famous Yentsetung, the Swallows' Cave.

The Swallows' Cave shows no signs of its existence from the outside. You approach it by a small footpath winding over rolling moorland until a very ordinary-looking Chinese temple is visible in a fold of the hill surrounded by the usual grove. We had difficulty even in finding our way there, and were fortunate in meeting with one or two peasants in the depopulated country who were able to put us on the right road. We walked into the temple and saw nothing unusual in the courtyard, with its standard shrubs and surrounding low temple buildings. A Taoist priest appeared and led us through a sort of back door, upon entering which one of the most fantastic scenes we had ever witnessed burst upon our view. It reminded us of nothing so forcibly as the built-up grottoes one sees on the stage in a fairy extravaganza. We had seen before many grottoes and caves such as are common in limestone regions, but nothing equal to this natural phenomenon hidden away in remote Yünnan. We now stood near the top of the grotto and looked down on a swiftly flowing river about 20 feet wide, which enters the cave from the north on our left and disappears in the gloom of a side cave on our right, its waters illumined by the sun shining through the trees which surround the entrance, 80 feet below where we stood on a narrow terrace near the summit. A steep staircase cut out of the rock wound round to a flat terrace, thirty feet below, lined by an elaborately carved stone balustrade overlooking the water—a terrace about forty feet square, upon which we afterwards spread our breakfast table. Side caves, also with stone stairs leading into them, fitted with shrines and carved inscriptions, offered numerous fresh points of view. Thus art had combined to enhance nature in an unobtrusive way, making, as it were, a frame for the picture. But the wonderful charm of the grotto is in its stalactites. These hang in thousands like banners from the roof, wavy, ribbon-shaped, in delicate tints of white, pink, and yellow. No photograph, apart from the difficulty of finding a suitable light, can do justice to the play of colour or even of the light and shade on a sun-lit day such as we were fortunate to see it in. When the Yünnan sanatorium is open by rail, this

will be one of its chief show places. We may add that the Swallows' Cave does not belie its name: hundreds of swallows flew in and out during the two hours, which we would, if we could, have prolonged into two days, which we spent feasting our eyes on this magic picture. The river, we may mention, comes to the surface again two miles lower down, and after disappearing again, ultimately reaches the West River of Canton.

Crossing over more grassy "divides," with limestone blocks protruding everywhere as thick as tombstones in a well-filled cemetery, we traversed three more basin-like valleys, all terraced one-third of the way up their sides until, 60 li from the Yentseung, we reached our destination for the night in the small but busy town of Chikai. We crossed two rivers on the way, one clear stream flowing over a pebbly bottom to the south, one yellow ochre stream flowing swiftly to the north, both crossed by solidly-built, wide-arched, stone bridges. Chikai is situated not far from a high serrated range, 3,000 or 4,000 feet, running east and west, and so at right angles to the prevailing direction of the mountains in Yunnan. This range, in which are situated the famous Yunnanese tin mines, dominates the Mêngtse plain, and forms the most conspicuous feature in the view from the town of Mêngtse, situated at the other extremity of the "basin." The Mêngtse "Haitse" measures about twelve miles N. and S. by about half that distance E. and W., and contains two meres, the remnants of the old lake. The town is situated in the south-east corner at the foot of the mountains which separate it from the Red River valley and which rise about two thousand feet above the Mêngtse plain. We crossed the smaller mere on a stone causeway and passed through magnificent fields of maize, the largest I have seen in China, 300 to 500 acres in extent, and the grain, now being harvested, growing to a height of ten feet—a tribute to the fertility of the limestone detritus, carefully manured, which forms the soil. Nearing the town, we found the land laid out in paddy-fields, irrigated by the streams from the neighbouring mountains. These mountains are singularly bare of everything but grass, owing to the annual winter firing of the grass whereby all the young trees are destroyed. Their

eastern side is now scored by the railway cutting along their flank. This runs at 1,000 feet above the plain and nowhere descends to the Mêngtse level; it enters the basin by a high pass in the S. E. corner after emerging from the head of the Namti canyon.

Mêngtse is a hsien city, with well-kept walls and a busy retail trade, but the main activity of the place is now centred in the east suburb, where are situated the offices of the Imperial Maritime Customs, the French Consulate, the extensive buildings in which are housed the local railway staff, a French hotel and three French trading stores, these latter mainly established to supply the needs of the railway people, of whom some sixty Europeans reside in this suburb and in the immediate neighbourhood. Mêngtse is the lowest town in Yunnan we had yet visited, being situated at only 3,500 feet above sea-level, and the air, after our residence in the higher altitudes of the interior, felt almost uncomfortably warm. The Imperial Maritime Customs at this "open port" possess a fine compound several acres in extent, in which stand a series of isolated buildings surrounded by trees; many of these are eucalypti, which the equable climate seems to suit admirably; planted little over ten years back, they are now large trees, overtopping the native acacias. The buildings are new, the original buildings having been destroyed in a raid by the workmen in the tin mines in 1898, when the Customs' staff had to fly for their lives; the raid being due to a rumour that the French were about to acquire the mines. The Customs collect dues on the goods imported from Tonking for consumption in Yunnan, chiefly cotton yarn; and on the exports, which are chiefly tin and opium; these dues are, by special agreement with the French, one-third less than those collectable under the fixed tariff,—a small boon to trade more than neutralised by the exorbitant transit tax collected in Tonking itself. Transit passes are issued here at half tariff rates and free goods from all detention at likin stations throughout the province, and the French take good care that these passes are duly honoured. Railway material and all stores for the railroad staff are imported free of duty and the land required for the road-

way has to be provided by the Chinese officials free of cost. As the greater part is valueless mountain land, this is not a serious matter; only where the road traverses bottom land have rice-fields to be purchased; the scale for these is ten, twenty, and thirty taels per mow, according to quality.

While in Mêngtse we received all possible kindness and information from the French heads of departments who kindly arranged an excursion for us to the celebrated Namti valley, in which the most difficult work of the whole route is being executed; and I must not here miss the opportunity to express my gratitude for the kindness and hospitality we enjoyed at the hands of all concerned in the work. The Namti, as the French call it, or Nanhsi as it is called in Chinese, is a stream which has its source in the Mêngtse mountains and which has cut its way down through a deep narrow canyon to the Red River which it enters, now increased to a stream, eighty yards in width, at the frontier town of Laokai, where it is spanned by a wide bridge connecting the French Settlement of Laokai with the Chinese town of Hôk'ou, and over which the railway passes. The building of the road is in the hands of a separate Construction Company working under the supervision of the Yunnan Railway Company proper. This Construction Company has been recently engaged in railway work in Salonica and the Levantine generally, and their work is let out in sections to Italian contractors or "entrepreneurs." One of these, who has his headquarters at Milati, a village situated near the source of the Namti, at a height of 2,000 feet above Mêngtse, we set out to visit. Riding up a steep pathway over broken rugged country, we reached the embankment of the line now being cut out along the mountain side; the soil is the same as everywhere in Yunnan—red sandy detritus in which the primeval harder limestone blocks lie buried, and it was curious, in a spot where a deep excavation had been dug out and the looser detritus had been removed, to see the limestone pinnacles left in situ, awaiting removal by blasting, much as we saw them washed out and exposed in the innumerable dry watercourses with which we found the mountains scored the whole way from the Szechuan border to the Red River.

Milati stands in a charming wooded valley high up, surrounded by mountain peaks; here the hospitable Italian entrepreneur invited us to partake of an excellent déjeuner in his improvised Chinese house, the office and headquarters of his section staff, after which he accompanied us to the head of the canyon, some five miles farther south, where the line begins its romantic descent of 5,000 feet to the Red River. The Milati plateau, though broken into ridges, is a comparatively level basin surrounded by peaks covered with thick forest containing many fine trees of varied sub-tropical growth, the few villages being entirely hidden in foliage. Towards the southern end of this high basin the Namti river has worn its way deep down through the soil into the underlying limestone, in which it has cut out a miniature gorge lined with vertical cliffs only a few yards apart. As it approaches the defile leading to the river, it breaks into falls, and lower down these are found of sixty and a hundred feet in height, and the railway is carried alongside of them, the line being run by the side of the gorge, piercing projecting points by over fifty tunnels, the longest of which extends a distance of 500 yards. Owing to the valley being practically confined to the width of the river bed and to its being enclosed between by high mountains on either side (encaissé), it is so confined and so closely shut in that, as the tropical lowlands are approached, the air is completely stagnant, and so unhealthy that all employed in it, as well natives as Europeans, sooner or later succumb to the malaria which is here of a deadly kind. The mortality this year has been so great that work was practically suspended,—to be resumed on the return of the cold season, provided sufficient coolies can be found to work there. Nothing will induce the Yunnanese to descend from their plateau nor, per contra, will the Annamites leave their tropical rice-swamps for higher levels. Thus, not only are the natural difficulties of the land almost insuperable but a still greater stumbling-block is the task of obtaining the requisite labour to overcome them. In truth, the completion of this railway in the wilds will be a lasting tribute to the boldness of its conception and to the determination and perseverance with which it will have been

carried to a successful conclusion. These eighty odd miles through the gorge of the Namti form the crux of the whole undertaking.

Parting with regret from our kind host, Mr. Neumann, the commissioner, we left Mêngtse by the high road over which passes the by no means inconsiderable trade at present carried on between French Indo-China and the province of Yunnan, a trade conveyed entirely by pack-animals, mainly for whose benefit exist the fine fields of maize that distinguish all this region. After traversing the usual narrow path between paddy-fields we commenced the ascent of a low pass crowned by an imposing gateway, past groves of the wide-spreading W'an-nien-ching (myriad years green)—a tree not unlike the banyan; then over a treeless grassy upland, after which we descended again into a wide well-watered valley terraced in rice-fields now harvesting, then rose again by a well-paved path skirting another richly cultivated and well-wooded valley on our left, until the paved road disappeared under an accumulation of soil which the heavy rain that now began to fall soon reduced to a wretched quagmire. From this time on we saw no more cultivated, or even inhabited country, barring halting places for the pack animals on the mountains, and the transshipping stations cleared out of the jungle that lines the Red River, until we reached the populous Annamite delta, now three hundred miles distant. We were still ascending the southern lip of the Mêngtse "cuvette" by a rise of over 3,000 feet, a distance of seven or eight miles over barren limestone ridges until we reached an upland whence the eye extended over countless peaks and pinnacles,—the summit of the high range that forms the north shore of the Red River. This upland was remarkable from the number of "mamelons" from one hundred to two hundred feet in height, which rose from the level surface,—steep cones of limestone, the formation consisting of strata lying at an angle of 45 or 50, the slope on one side, the edges of the strata on the other; but how denudation has produced such a series of perfectly shaped cones, it is difficult to explain alone in the relative hardness of the stone of which they are formed to that of the mother formation. Crossing this upland we encountered a high cold wind, which chilled us to the bone, and we were right glad when, after cautiously feeling our way over the rough descent, an hour after dark we took shelter for the night in a small "horse" inn

in the little village of Shuitien, 2,000 feet below the summit.

We left Shuitien by a narrow defile with fine mountains on either side and followed down a small stream, which we quitted to suddenly ascend a pass of four hundred feet on our left whence we looked down direct upon the valley of the Red River. The river itself is too closely shut in its ravine to be visible until quite near but we were able to see the corresponding high range which bounds its right bank and so knew that we were at last approaching the termination of our long land journey and were at the point of exchanging the vicissitudes of inland travel for the comparative luxury of the water.

The crest of the high range before us forms, in part, the boundary between Tonkin and China, the Red River not forming the boundary until the French frontier station of Lungpö is reached, some fifty kilometres below Manhao and sixty above Laokai; at which point the river finally crosses the frontier and from thence onwards flows entirely through French territory until its embouchure is reached in the Gulf of Tonking below the port of Haiphong.

These forest-covered mountains must, in ancient times, have formed an impassable barrier between Tonking and China, and account for the marked distinction in race between Annamites and Chinese. A wide belt of unpopulated country separated Yunnan as well as Kuangsi and Kuangtung from the Annamite region.

We now descended some five hundred feet in about five hours and dropped even more suddenly from a temperate into a tropical climate than we had risen three months previously from the stagnant valley of the Kinsha on to the breezy uplands of Yunnan. As we turned a corner of the little village of ~~Tao~~ ^{Tao} we really felt as though entering the door of a hot house, and the illusion was completed by the change to the tropical vegetation by which we were now surrounded. ~~Tao~~ ^{Tao} is remarkable as being the spot at which the trains of pack-mules and sore-backed ponies pass the night before descending to the port of Manhao; it being reputed fatal for man or beast to pass the night in that deadly spot. So the men load up their beasts in the early morning, descend to Manhao and there deliver their packs, receiving their return loads the same day and re-ascending to ~~Tao~~ ^{Tao} the same night to sleep. At length, when about eight hundred feet above it and half-way between ~~Tao~~ ^{Tao} and Manhao, we caught

Yao ta

Yao ta

Yao ta

Yao ta

our first sight of the famous river, our goal for so many days past,—a narrow ribbon of smooth oily-looking pink-red water between steep green banks, the hills opposite covered with dense tropical jungle and with no signs of cultivation. The river appeared small and insignificant though its valley is imposing from the height of the steep mountains that form its shores. No bribe will induce a Yunnanese to pass a night there nor indeed to descend within a day's journey of the Red River on any terms.

It was extraordinary the stories we heard in Yunnanfu and Mêngtse of the deadly air of this valley and, had we not been old travellers, we should have been persuaded either to put off our journey thither until midwinter or to return by land the way we had come. The Chinese, with the exception of the natives who are born and live in them, seem far more susceptible to malarial influences than even Europeans are, and it is a fact that numbers of Szechuan and Yunnan coolies, who, under the temptation of high pay, have consented to go to Manhao, have fallen sick and died there. Hence nothing would induce our own servants, who had promised to accompany us to the end of our land journey, to go on with us when the time came, and we were compelled to send them home from Mêngtse and from thence on to "do" for ourselves until we ultimately got on board the "Messageries fluviales" steamer in Laokai.

We put up for the night in a Cantonese inn in Manhao, which is a small place built on a narrow flat along the left bank of the Red River, and arranged to take passage in a native boat, the size of a small "wupan," floored with slabs of tin, to Laokai for the sum of thirty dollars. Manhao seemed very quiet and still, the business of the place,—the unloading and reloading of mules and the transfer of their packs to and from the boats moored under the bank,—being over for the day at the time of our arrival shortly before sunset. The one street is composed of Cantonese "hongs" who attend to this business. The air was certainly hot and steamy and between the showers the sun was intensely powerful, but otherwise we noticed no difference in the climate from what we had experienced on similar days at the same season of the year in Chungking. All the same, we were glad to get on board our boat the next morning and we rowed rapidly down stream. The river below Manhao, the head of junk navigation, runs from one

hundred to one hundred and fifty yards in width and flows down to Laokai in an almost continuous rapid.

In the first forty miles we traversed fifteen true rapids, similar to those on the Min River above Suifu which, but for our experience on the Yangtze and the adept management of the Chinese boatmen, we might have thought alarming. The whole way the banks were covered with impenetrable jungle, masses of wild banana and many unknown trees and flowering shrubs, acacias predominating, but all weighed down by an omni-present creeper, a sort of convolvulus which gave to the landscape a monotonous one-shade of bright green, and so destroyed the variety we had expected to see in tropical scenery. The jungle is so thick that no towing path exists and the upward-bound junks are slowly propelled by painful poling along the shore. We made the downward journey to Laokai of about eighty miles in ten hours but were told that the upward journey under favourable conditions occupies as many days and, when, as now, the freshets are on, it takes a full month to get from Laokai to Manhao. Yet the scenery as we rushed past it, was very pleasing, owing to the steepness of the wooded foothills that formed the banks and the picturesque outline of the lofty jungle-covered mountains behind them. Each bend in the river, and there were many such sharp turns, disclosed a new picture and showed up new peaks in the distance.

At noon we came to a small clearing in which stands the village of Shinkai (Newmarket), which seems now to have been abandoned for Manhao, thirty miles higher up. Shortly after, we came to the French military frontier station of Lungpö, consisting of a small clearing on the right bank in which stands a white-washed bungalow surrounded by palisades with a few low thatched native cottages in the rear. At length, at sunset our boatmen moored alongside a steep muddy bank, while we demanded to be landed in Laokai.

Never before in China have I been so nonplussed by a total inability to comprehend a word of the language of our boatmen. These appeared to be Cantonese by origin, but speaking a dialect, a mixture of Cantonese and Annamite. We shouted "Laokai," but they only pointed down river, and so instead of putting up at the hotel, as our host in Manhao, through whom we had chartered the boat, had told

us we should be able to do, there was nothing for it but to unpack our campbeds and await the dawn. In the morning it again poured in torrents, and nothing would induce the boatmen to move, and it was not till ten o'clock that the pangs of hunger induced me to climb up the slippery mud-bank and find out where we were. I found, from a friendly shop-keeper who spoke Chinese, that we were moored off the town of Hôk'ou, which is on the right bank of the Namti, the French town of Laokai being on the left bank, a railway bridge over the Namti connecting the two places. Hôk'ou has one long, busy, very muddy street running between retail shops for a mile or more along the left bank of the Red River. My intelligent friend informed me that there was an I. M. Customs here with foreigners in the office, and directed me to the "Haikuan," consisting of a sort of mat-shed built amidst the jungle on the slope of the hill, and the kindly Commissioner in charge at once permitted and directed our boatmen to proceed to Laokai and to moor below the hotel there. Our detention was due to the boat carrying tin and not yet having entered, owing, I supposed, to the rain, although no one could understand the Lao-pan's talk; and so our troubles were over.

Laokai presents the same contrast to Hokou that the Model Settlement does to the Shanghai city; on crossing the railway bridge that now unites the two towns, one passes abruptly from filth and disorder into wide macadamised streets lined with shade trees; clean white bungalows, one and two-storied, a small bund with pontoon wharf—a miniature Point de Galle with the same tropical air and vegetation, but a close steamy atmosphere due to its situation in a narrow valley distant 265 miles from the sea. There are few or no Chinese in Laokai (it costs them \$3 a head to enter French territory) and, in the siesta hour, in which we landed, apparently no inhabitants. The military are stationed on the right bank and have to cross the rushing river by ferry to come into Laokai; the piers of a high bridge, solid circular pillars of brick and stone were erected some years ago, but the idea of completing the bridge seems to have been abandoned. The chief buildings are the offices of the administration, a spacious Custom-house with godowns attached, the offices of the "Messageries Fluviales," the Post Office

and the Hotel Fleury, where we put up, also a roomy military "cercle" pleasantly situated on a bluff overlooking the river, and a bandstand in the central "square." Towards evening, after an enjoyable déjeuner at the hotel, we sat on the verandah listening to a military band, we having happily arrived on band-day, and felt that in crossing the Namti we had re-entered civilisation; but we pitied the folk whose duties relegate them to this depressing spot, with little to occupy them; no sports, no society, nowhere to go, hemmed in as they are by pathless jungle. There is the excitement of the arrival of the "chaloupe" from Yenbay, 143 kilometres lower down (ninety miles) from May to October, i.e., during the season of the summer freshets, after which communication is confined to the tedious native junks. Of course the advent of the railway will change the position, but even then Laokai, up to the time when the surrounding country shall have been cleared and brought under cultivation, hardly seems to offer any commercial future. Its importance consists in its being the frontier station on the borders of Tonking and China and in its military dépôt which serves admirably to encourage the obstructive Chinese officials at the provincial capital to take a complacent view of French enterprises in their province.

We were fortunate in finding a "chaloupe" of the Messageries Fluviales making her slow way up stream on the following day, and by her we forthwith took passage to Yenbay, a day's journey down river. The "chaloupe" turned out to be a small sternwheeler, heavily laden with cargo and crowded with "relief" soldiers, French and Annamite, very badly kept, extremely dirty, with one saloon on the upper deck and no accommodation for sleeping or washing. The crew, including captain and pilots, were all Annamite and the engineers Cantonese. Upon crossing the frontier and entering Laokai we had left China behind; Hok'ou has the usual crowded population of all Chinese towns, Laokai seemed to have none; the boys in the hotel were all Annamite and appeared to us far below the Chinese in intelligence and willingness to oblige. They mostly speak French; few Europeans in Tonking except the French employed in the

administration, who are paid to learn the language, speaking Annamite. The language itself has a marked affinity with Cantonese, and anyone conversant with the latter should soon pick it up. The steamer was leaving at 6 a.m. and neither on the evening before or on the morning itself, could the hotel proprietor find coolies to take our luggage down to the boat, and but for the kindness of Mr. Shrigardus, the Commissioner of the I. M. Customs, who brought his own Chinese across from Hok'ou for the purpose, we should have been in evil case.

Laokai is the administrative depôt for the troops stationed along the river down to Yenbay, a distance of ninety-one miles, and our steamer, the Yenbay, had the task on this trip of furnishing the different garrisons with their supplies for the coming quarter; these consisted mainly of cases of flour from France, packed in tin. The steamer swung round as we reached the different stations and landed her cargo on the bank, which was carried up by the soldiers, French and Annamite. The stations are little more than clearances in the jungle, and now that the Black Flags and pirates that formerly infested the river have all been happily suppressed, the troops have little to do; anything more monotonous and depressing than the life led in these lonely spots it is difficult to conceive, and it is hardly to be wondered at that opium-smoking is commonly resorted to as a pastime and as a prophylactic against the prevailing malaria. Our fellow-passengers were mainly non-commissioned officers, either on short leave for a visit to the capital (Hanoi), or else being invalided home; one of these frankly informed us that he smoked opium regularly and that only those who did so were immune from dysentery and the prevalent jungle fever.

We reached Yenbay shortly before sunset and went ashore to dine at the hotel, only breakfast being provided on the steamer, on board of which passengers cannot pass the night. We were again fortunate in finding a connecting steamer in port, leaving in the morning for Hanoi and by paying \$4 extra for a cabin (we had already paid \$55 each for our passage tickets) were enabled to sleep on board and so be ready for the early start in the morning. This "chaloupe", the "Chobdo" was

a large sternwheeler that runs all the year round between Yenbay, the winter head of navigation, and Hanoi, 115 miles; better found than the wretched Yenbay and with ample accommodation and conveniences, her crew were equally Annamite and her engineers Cantonese, but she carried in addition a French purser to whose civility we were much indebted.

Yenbay, as a residence, was hardly more attractive than Laokai. In fact, the latter in its well-kept roads, abundance of shade trees, neat tropical bungalows and background of forest-covered mountains is very pleasing to the eye and decidedly picturesque. Yenbay is a far busier and more populous place besides being the present terminus of the Yenbay-Hanoi railway. The country here is more open and we arrived towards the close of the summer rains, which were still continuing; the roads were deep in sticky red mud and the white-washed bungalows presented a muddy and dilapidated appearance; the main road, by the river through the foreign quarter to the railway station passes by a long wide street lined with untidy native shops and dwellings, reminding one of the suburban native streets at Singapore. The railway to Hanoi was interrupted from Vietry on, the embankments having been washed out by the torrential rains; the same was the case with the embankments laid for the extension to Laokai. These follow up the left bank of the river and have apparently been built by the "Travaux Publics" too near the water and at too low a level and have suffered accordingly from the summer freshets; trains will thus hardly be running to Laokai by April of next year, and a heavy indemnity will be consequently due to the Yunnan Railway Co. by the colony which has guaranteed to complete the line by that date.

We left Yenbay the following morning in the "Chobdo" and at 2 p.m. reached the town of Vietry, pleasantly situated at the point of junction of the Rivière Claire, with the Red River. As its name implies, the Rivière Claire is a stream of clear water which descends from the limestone ranges on the Yunnan border to the north, and the "Myriad Mountains" of Kuangsi,—whence it flows in a course, forming an angle of twenty degrees with that of the turbid Red River

coming from the north-west. Its channel at its mouth is 320 yards in width, where it is spanned by a fine bridge which carries the railway. The Rivière Noire which rises in Yunnan, rises west of and flows a long distance parallel with the Red River; after turning sharply north it joins the main stream on the opposite shore. All these, and indeed the major number of the streams traversing Tonking have all their origin in the mountains bordering the great plateau (Yunnan), and flow in nearly parallel courses from North to South. Vietry stands at the head of the delta, which we are now entering, and is already an important commercial centre. Between Yenbay and Vietry we called at more military posts, occupied some by Annamite, some by French troops of the Légion Etrangère; the Annamites form good soldiers, are smart and well-behaved, and we were told that they give no trouble and are free from crime and even misdemeanours. They wear a becoming uniform of yellow khaki with putties and flat-topped hats of plaited bamboo, trimmed with red, and look far neater and cleaner than their French comrades with their loose trousers, blue coats, and pith helmets.

At Vietry we leave the mountains, and a country apparently bare of inhabitants, behind, and enter the densely-peopled rice-delta, a level expanse 5,000 square miles in extent, that forms the kernel of the colony. From here on, but for the banana trees round the villages, we might be traversing the upper reaches of the Huangpu; although we are never out of sight of distant blue ranges which form a fine background to the vivid green of the paddy-fields, the second crop of which is now maturing. The delta produces two crops of rice: one reaped in May and one in November. The usual endyked banks here line the river as also the numerous transverse arroyaux, or creeks, and protect the fields from inundation; this year, however, the embankments have given way and large areas have been inundated. Hanoi, the capital, which is built in a swamp, comparatively even more low-lying than Shanghai, was seriously threatened. Although by the time of our arrival the inundation had drained off, yet the grand railway bridge, which carries the line from the right to the left bank of the Red River, was so near the water that our "chaloupe" with lowered funnel

could only just scrape through without touching.

Among our fellow-passengers was a padre of the Missions Etrangères who superintended a chrétienté of some 20,000 Christians in the interior; he spoke very highly of the Annamite people and praises their women as being exceedingly well conducted; this is noteworthy, in that the Annamite women, unlike their Chinese sisters, appear to have absolute freedom; they do most of the business besides hard manual labour; although their civilisation came from China, they refused to accept crippled feet as a mark of distinction, although they adopted the Chinese cut in their dress but with more sober colours, generally brown and black; indeed the gaudy, "criard" colours that the Chinese glory in are totally foreign to the Annamite taste, except in the state dress of their mandarins. The hair is worn in a top-knot at the back of the head, much as in China in the days of the Mings; the conspicuous feature is the hat of bamboo and palm leaves, which with the men is always pointed (as in Kueichou and Yunnan) and with the women flat, as large as a cartwheel and nearly as heavy. Men and women generally go barefoot and their carriage is excellent—a great contrast to the bowed Chinese. As a race they are far more homogeneous than are these latter, the head generally broad with regular features, the skin a more pronounced but soft yellow, and generally better-looking; the women especially compare very favourably in this respect with their Chinese neighbours. They would appear to be an ancient race, cut off by rugged mountains and pathless jungle from free intercourse with their neighbours and so there has been less admixture; a purer race (of Mally-Mongolian type) has resulted and they are generally free from the "mongrel" appearance, noticeable especially in Southern and Western China and in Western Japan, while doubtless they are at the same time wanting in the energy that "mongrel" parentage would seem to favour, where the disparity between the parents is not too wide.

Hanoi boasts a very fine bridge (supplied by a Parisian firm) which carries the railway and foot passengers across the Red River. It is a cantilever, reminding

One of the great Forth Bridge, is over a mile in length and spans the river proper, here about half a mile wide, together with the sand flats, rarely covered, that line the opposite bank. The deep water channel is on the Hanoi side, along the right bank, and here is a wide bund lined with scattered offices and stores; but the main residential and business quarter stands half a mile back from the river and surrounds a small lake, originally swamp, which has been happily reclaimed and so converted into an extremely ornamental feature of this well-planned city. Another very large lake bounds the northern suburb; the site lies low and the inhabited portion has been artificially raised as in Shanghai. Hanoi has been so often described, together with the imposing scale upon which it has been laid out, as compared with the haphazard way in which British colonial towns in the Far East are left to grow of themselves, that we need not go into more detail. Suffice it to say that, with its broad well-kept streets, squares, cafés, and abundance of foliage, it makes a most pleasing impression and is a worthy setting to the Government of Indo-China, which now has its seat here. We drove in rickshas or, as the French call them "pousse-pousses" to the Hotel Metropole, the best hotel in the Far East, magnificently appointed, furnished and decorated in excellent taste, and with a frontage of 300 feet to the street. There is also a finely situated club near-by—the "Cercle de l'Union"—and a grand opera-house is being built at a cost, we were told, of £20,000. The botanical gardens are already laid out on a large scale, and afford fine shady drives and possess a menagerie of the chief fauna of the region, including a most intelligent elephant. A haras, or stud-farm, is also in full operation, at which experiments in view of the amelioration of the breeds of domestic animals are carried out on an imposing scale—horses, Annam and Mongolian, and ponies; shorthorns and native cattle; sheep, southdown and merino, pigs, geese, duck and barn door fowls. Large numbers of these animals are housed in roomy buildings suitable to the climate and a wide acreage of land is laid down in pasturage for their maintenance. The superintendent, an ex-army veterinary surgeon, informed us that the pasturage

was excellent and the return of reaped fodder per acre extraordinarily high, seven or eight times that of grass-land in France. Our visit to this haras was full of interest as showing the results obtained by scientific selections of breeds, and how much is being achieved by the French authorities for the benefit of the colonists and natives of Tonking. The animals were all in excellent condition, and it was a great pleasure to see them. The main building of the Exhibition of 1902, a well-lighted solid structure in renaissance style, is now utilised as a museum of the natural products, arts, and manufactures of Indo-China. Thus there is plenty for the visitor to see and investigate, and we found the three days, which was all we could allot to Hanoi, far too short to do the city justice.

Haiphong, the port of Hanoi and the centre of outer communication by rail and water of the Tongking delta generally, is distant 100 miles from the latter city and is reached in four hours' time. The railway line, whether proceeding north or south, equally leaves Hanoi by way of the great bridge over the Red River and runs the whole way through the paddy-fields of the delta, with the high mountains (5,000 feet) that mark the frontier between Tongking and the Chinese province of Kuangtung visible in the distance, on the left. In the foreground of these mountains, as Haiphong is approached, the curiously rugged low ridge of limestone pinnacles which extends into the bay of Along, and there forms the group of picturesque rocky islets, which make this bay famous, stands out conspicuous. The town of Haiphong is built on the right bank of the Cuu-cam river, a stream fed from the Thannoi mountains on the north, near the Canton border; and is connected with the Red River by cross channels. The whole country here, on the ocean edge of the delta, is a vast low-lying swamp, from which the site of the city has been painfully reclaimed and which is still intersected by wide tidal creeks. The river at this point is about a quarter-mile wide and fifty to sixty feet deep, and affords good anchorage; at the mouth, however, which is fifteen miles distant, a sand-bar limits the draft of vessels trading to Haiphong to eighteen feet, but by dredging it is intended to increase the water to twenty-four feet.

Although Haiphong boasts only some 20,000 inhabitants, as against the 100,000 or more attributed to Hanoi, yet the former struck us as the busier place—more movement in its streets and more business at its wharves—due, of course, to its being a sea-port. The town is well laid out, in wide streets; as in Hanoi every provision has been made for future expansion; the houses are well-built, the principal residences having ample gardens surrounding them. The residents of Haiphong, of whom nearly 1,000 are European, enjoy further the proximity of sea and mountain, and so possess an endless choice of summer resorts within the compass of an afternoon's drive on the excellent roads that surround the city.

After spending a day in Haiphong and enjoying the comparative freshness of the air there (mid-September) we embarked on board the "Marty" steamer, Hué, for Hongkong. Our passage through Tonking gave us but a glimpse of what the French are doing in this their great new colony, but with what we did see we were fairly astonished. When one considers that the French have had quiet possession of the country for barely fifteen years, the solid work that has been accomplished is truly surprising; no labour has been spared in opening up the country to colonisation by roads and railways and in rendering the cities healthy and attractive for residence. If, as is sometimes reproached, French colonies are overdone with "fonctionnaires," at least these are not idle; the main criticism of one coming from British colonies is, that too little is left to individual initiative and too great demands made upon "l'administration." Yet we learn from the admirable summary of Progress in Indo-China by "Pierre Padaran" (*) that at the end of 1900 there were already 650 European planters engaged in tropical plantations over an

area of 322,000 hectares, which is equal to the sum total of European plantations in the island of Ceylon, whilst in Upper Burma, acquired by us about the same period, so far there are none. The unoccupied mountain area open to colonisation in Indo-China is, however, infinitely greater than in either of the preceding countries; the total area of the colony being 817,000 square kilometres (314,000 square miles), of which practically the river deltas alone are populated. The terms offered to would-be colonists are extraordinarily favourable; while the French Administrators are now paying more attention to the outside world around them and are studying the methods of Java and Ceylon and profiting thereby. The "aléas" or drawbacks to the progress of the colony lie in the narrow spirit of the mother country—the Métropole—who would make of it a French preserve—by means of differential tariffs and by regulations tending to exclude all non-French elements, be they European or Asiatic, British or Chinese—from taking part in its development. Excessive transit dues are imposed on goods from Hongkong and Singapore destined for the hinterland of Yunnan, with the impracticable design of compelling such Hinterlaender to draw their supplies from direct French sources. The monopoly of supply accorded to the mother country in the colony itself, enhances to residents the cost of most necessities and of all the luxuries of life, and so makes living dearer than in the neighbouring free colonies. On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that the "Métropole" spends money upon her colonial children with a lavish hand, and so is entitled to a special return; yet, while the population of France remains stationary, this exclusive policy must greatly retard the industrial development of Indo-China, a country which, forming as it does a link between the dense population of British India on the West and the teeming millions of China on the East, and with natural resources equal to either, should, in the nature of things, develop into one of the most productive countries, if not into the greatest entrepôt that the world has yet seen.

We cannot take our leave of Tongking without commending it to our fellow-residents in the Far East, nor without

(*) *Les Possibilités Economiques de l'Indo-Chine*. Paris, au siège du comité de l'Asie française, 19 Rue Bonaparte. pp. 124.—A most informing book and in small compass, and though it only carries us up to 1902, it is certainly the best short account of the topography and resources of the colony of Indo-China yet published.

bearing grateful testimony to the courtesy we enjoyed at all hands during our brief visit. When the Yunnan railway is in running order, Tonking will be as well known as Japan, and then the climate of Yunnan will be found more bracing and, in summer especially, the air, far drier and fresher than in Japan at that season. The total distance from Haiphong to Yunnanfu by the new line of rail is 853 kilometers, or 533 miles; so that, when it is completed Hongkong will be brought within less than a week of the Yunnan sanitarium and the delightful region of its great lakes.

The steamer *Hué*, on which we were now bound to Hongkong, via Pakhoi, Hoihow, and Kuangchowwan, turned out to be an old acquaintance, being one of the fine boats built by Chinese order, some sixteen years ago, to run between Formosa and the mainland. But how fallen from her high estate! She came out from the builders, Hawthorn, Leslie & Co. of Newcastle, as the *Smith*, while the Chinese christened her the *Mei-shih*, at which time her speed was fourteen knots and all her appointments first-class; she now steams ten knots only and her passenger quarters are cruelly dilapidated and ill-kept. On the third day out from Haiphong we put into the new French port, situated on the mainland of the province of Canton, Kuangchowwan (=Canton Bay), and were much interested in visiting this new "free port" on Chinese territory and the destined rival to Hongkong.

The bay of Kuangchow forms one of the finest harbours in the world, whether for trade or defence. It is entirely landlocked, an island off the mouth admitting access through two narrow entrances: once inside, it furnishes an anchorage ground ten miles by three with a depth of water of ten fathoms. After traversing this wide expanse, the bay narrows at its northern end to an arm of the sea one to two miles in width, at the head of which is the embouchure of the *Kamhó* or Gold River, which descends from the range that encloses the valley of the West River on the south and marks the limit of the territory ceded to the French in 1898. The land area of this territory covers some 317 square miles, and though the soil is sandy—much as at Pakhoi, situated on the opposite side of the

Leichou peninsula, eighty miles to the West—the land is well cultivated and contains a population of 200,000 Chinese distributed in 800 villages. This new free port is under the administration of the Government of Indo-China, who are represented by a local resident, together with an ample administrative staff. As is customary with the French, in laying out their new acquisition, grand views have prevailed and the future greatness of the port has been amply foreseen; thus one inlet is relegated to a naval port, and here the warships lie at anchor, out of sight of the administrative and commercial ports.

These latter are also distinct and are established on opposite shores of the northern arm of the bay, across which, in bad weather, as at the time of our visit, communication is by no means easy. The administrative town is on the left, (treating this "arm" as the estuary of the *Kam* river) or east shore, and consists of the "Residence," the offices of the Administration and the dwellings of the administrative staff. It also includes a market with a small surrounding street of native shopkeepers. A jetty has been built, and the adjoining, mostly flat, country laid out in wide metalled, rectangular roads, now mostly grassgrown. This Settlement, known as *Matché*, has a most desolate, uninhabited appearance and, as it was there that we first landed, we received a decidedly unfavourable impression of the place; but it is only fair to state that it had been devastated by a typhoon in the early summer. On the opposite shore is the commercial Settlement and military station known as *Fort Bayard*, off which the "*Hué*" was anchored. We crossed the strait in a gale of wind and rain in one of the cockle-shell looking but solidly built and excellent sea-boats of the place. These sail well with a single Chinese lug and, being provided with a centre-board (which is inserted before the mast and close to the bow), sail remarkably close to the wind. The "invention" of the centre-board is usually credited to a naval lieutenant 100 years back only, but it appears to have been in use in China for over 1,000 years. At Hoihow, the "port" of Kuangchow in the island of Hainan, are to be found the best centre-board boats on the coast. Ships here lie in the open roadstead, off

a flat sand-beach and communicate with the shore by means of these boats which, being flat-bottomed, are hauled up on the beach when not in use.

We found "Fort Bayard" a more lively place than is the "administrative capital;" still its liveliness is limited and only noticeable in comparison with the peaceful calm that reigns in Matché. We put ashore at this latter place a smart young Frenchman, a pillar of the Administration at Matché, a fellow-traveller who had been for a visit to Haiphong. We could hardly help envying him the retreat provided for him—a fine climate and excellent sea bathing,—and left him regretfully, "the world forgetting, by the world forgot."

Fort Bayard is built on ground that slopes to the sea, and, the buildings being less scattered than at Matché, has more the appearance of a town, and indeed of a well-built town. The chief buildings are spacious barracks for the considerable garrison of French and of Annamite troops which is stationed here. The south coast of the Canton province, exposed to the China Sea and open to the monsoons, with mountains sheltering it on the North, is exceedingly healthy; the soil is light and porous and raised in low undulating swells well above the sea-level. Consequently the station here provides an excellent change for troops enervated by the damp heat of Tonking. We were courteously shown over the men's barracks, which are in roomy detached buildings covering a large area of ground and affording them every comfort, not to say luxury. There is a really fine military club installed in a handsome two-storied building and open to all ranks, presented to the new colony by the all-pervading M. Doumer. This late Governor of Indo-China has left his mark everywhere; he would appear to have been a veritable "hustler;" to him is due the equilibrium established in the budget of Indo-China,

the late Hanoi exhibition and the Yunnan railway; he appears to have been physically and mentally untirable, and we heard of his riding from Mêngtse to Yunnanfu in four days; the time by the usual stages being eleven. A new cathedral, with two towers, also adorns the Settlement, which otherwise consists of a street of Cantonese shops and a single French store, well provided and selling at the moderate prices which one expects to find in a "port franc." The genial proprietor, M. Champestève, we heard referred to as "*le colon*," the one serious colonist so far of the new Hongkong.

From Kuanghouwan to Hongkong the distance is 237 miles on an E.N.E. course, and we reached our destination after a most interesting five days' coasting voyage. Our last visit to Hongkong had been in days before the grand foreshore reclamation scheme had been thought of, and we were accordingly not a little astonished at the appearance which the modern town of Victoria now presents; the magnificent new buildings, the crowded piles of new offices, the throngs in the streets and the traffic in the harbour contrasted marvellously with the lotus-eating lands we had been travelling through, and we felt more than ever enamoured of free trade and of free intercommunication for all alike. Hongkong raises an annual revenue of six million dollars, chiefly from land and excise taxes, and her emergence from the barbarism of Custom Houses is a fine object-lesson in Eastern Asia; in these days of protective tariffs and subsidised industries, we could wish that our Mother Country likewise might so arrange her revenue as to shake off the incubus of Custom Houses in toto, and so provide a still more striking object-lesson to her European and American neighbours than does even her marvellously successful colony on the whilom barren islet of Hongkong.

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